

The Tales of Jokul Frosti

by Purplerose128

Category: How to Train Your Dragon, Rise of the Guardians

Genre: Adventure, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Jack Frost

Pairings: Hiccup/Jack Frost

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-05-26 21:20:50

Updated: 2013-09-27 15:00:41

Packaged: 2016-04-26 15:11:20

Rating: T

Chapters: 9

Words: 26,791

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: After stealing some of Father Time's sand, Pitch journeys into Viking times to culture more powerful Nightmares. The Guardians follow him through time to stop him, but not without Jack falling for Pitch's prime target: Hiccup. With the Boogeyman taking his worst fears and making them reality, can the young Viking and the Guardians defeat him before time itself is altered?

1. Silver and Pitch Black

Finally got this story started, thank God. (took you long enough, Gina... :/)

Anyway, this is the redone version of a story I previously wrote... and deleted because I'm putting that part in this story anyway, so... kind of pointless to have the same scene in two different stories, right?

So, I'm testing that waters with this story. I'm trying to write longer chapters for things because that seems to be my big problem. I don't seem to put in enough detail and I'm working on that with this project.

Um... reviews would be very helpful. Let me know what you think of this so far? I think this story's going to be cool, but encouragement from others helps me a lot. So... yeah... I'll get out of your way now...

* * *

><p>The richness of the Italian sun shined down on the high-heeled boot, welcoming in a new day that began to bid adieu to the Man in the Moon's form until the evening would come once again. The orange and yellow light danced off of the mountain ranges lying behind the open land and bustling cities. Yes, only sunrise and the day already

seemed promising to the residents of the country as early risers began their morning rituals, completely unaware of what the peaceful, snow-capped mountains in the distance hid from their sight.<p>

Carved into a mountain side that was nearly impossible to climb up without wings or some form of magic, ruins of an ancient establishment rested in serenity. The sunlight made its dull clay bricks give off a yellow tint that reflected off of the patches of snow scattering the space. Its crumbling stone pillars seemed to barely support the roof above them that appeared to merge with the mountain itself, while other pillars and some scarce statues littered the roughly paved floor in front of a massive marble door, faded and cracked from age. Above the heavy mass of rock, a small hourglass was carved into the facade of the building.

Despite its apparent age, this fortress was much more than the eye could behold. Inside the ancient ruins, one might mistake it for an eclectic castle that was polished moments before their entry. Past the aged door was a library of great proportions. Shelves were lined in rows that reached the peak of the high ceilings and each shelf was packed with literature of all types, in countless languages. The space was decorated in red furniture with golden trims that were accented with multiple golden statues of multiple time-keeping devices.

Sitting amongst a stack of opened books sat a man that appeared no older than thirty, immersing himself in the adventure that was messily scribbled across the handwritten pages. He scratched his chin intently and let out a quiet chuckle. A crow sounded in the distance, gaining his attention. The man nonchalantly turned to the source of the sound, a crow fluttering down to his level and letting out one more cry.

"That time already, is it?" The man sighed, folding the corner of the page he was on and closing the book. He stood from his seat and opened his dark brown trench coat, peering at the many hourglasses resting inside. He inspected the containers of silver sand for a moment before a smirk crept onto his face, noting that many were nearly filled on the bottoms. "I guess it is." He held out his arm to the crow. "Come."

Without hesitation, the black bird landed on his forearm and climbed to a rest on his master's shoulder. The pair walked toward a set of seven doors in the library. The man stared at the carvings above the doors, each depicting a different continent of the planet. He settled his eyes on his homeland of Europe and stepped inside. He effortlessly strode down the incredibly ornate hallway that lied in wait on the other side of the door. He passed more doors, which all had the name of a country printed on a silver plaque. "Germany" "France" "Spain" the list carried on as he passed them all by.

Coming to the end of the hall, he found the epicenter of the library, which contained what it was created to protect. A giant hourglass, filled with silver sand that spiraled inside like a small tornado, sat in the middle of this room. The distinguished fellow approached the marvel before him and stroked the crow's head, causing it to coo. "I guess it's time to renew time, eh, Kali?" The crow cawed again happily before shooing herself away from her master, who once again

opened his trench coat, revealing the silver sand in the hourglasses was then also swirling inside their glass barriers. Soothing light began to shine through the skylight over the massive hourglass. The man in the trench coat peered up to see the dim crescent form of the Man in the Moon looming over it. "Right on time, Manny." He smiled and released his grips on the coat, which then stayed opened on its own. He motioned his hands delicately and slowly drew the sand out of the containers in his pockets. The freed particles of time itself circled the man and the sands still contained within the giant hourglass intensified in speed. When Manny's light showed stronger upon the hourglass, the top cracked open and the free flying sand propelled itself inside, dancing in the moonlight. The sands mixed with what was already inside the glass; light faded and the lid closed again.

A sparkle of silver spattered down upon the man and dispersed, collecting itself within his tiny hourglasses. He smiled as the sands settled in the largest hourglass, at the top half of the structure, and began to trickle down to the bottom. Kali reappeared on his shoulder and was welcomed with a gentle hand running against her feathers. "Shall we return to library, my dear?" With Kali's caw as his only response, he closed his trench coat and strode back down the hallway he came from.

The walk was silent between the man and his feathered companion. It was soundless in the library, as normal, but something irked them both as they glided down the corridor. It was almost too quiet to be content. Shining silver eyes traced the molding on the ceiling and every dark wood door. The air was thickened by an unknown source that added an unwelcome pressure onto his usually relaxed state. He hadn't seen any other crows from his flock in some time and their distant caws and the sounds of their feet scurrying about the bookshelves behind closed doors were nonexistent. There was something really off; something he couldn't quite describe.

Re-emerging in the main part of his library, his fears were realized. The man and his bird were met by a form of darkness seated where he had been before he left the room. This tall shadow of a man had the book opened to the folded page.

"Viking times!" A velvet voice spoke. The form turned to the man in the trench coat, with an evil grin made from jagged teeth. The intruder was none other than the boogeyman. "I figured you were over that time period by now, Father Time?"

The man groaned at his title. "You know, I still don't understand how I acquired that name; I'm not a married man and I lack children."

"Living under a pile of dirt does that to a man, doesn't it?" Pitch called back. "But there was that interesting rumor about you and Mother Nature awhile back, wasn't there?"

"That was five hundred years ago, Pitch." Father Time responded. "What interests me is how you're here. Last I heard, the Guardians defeated you and you vanished not long after that."

"They did and I was." Pitch replied "Fear can't simply be snuffed out." He closed the book. "But that's not why I'm here."

"I suggest you leave before I have to deal with you myself."

"I wouldn't be so sure about that, time keeper." Pitch purred "If I know correctly, you have just offered the Man in the Moon all of the sand you've accumulated over the past twenty-four hours. Your entire personal supply is depleted back to him, correct?" Father Time's face fell at the comment. "I figured as such. Now, I'm feeling rather generous right now, so I'll offer you a deal. Either I get what I desire from you or it will be taken from you by my Nightmares." At the sound of their name, five black horses of corrupted dreams emerged from the shadows of the library and eyed their objective. "Which will it be?"

Father Time scanned his surroundings and clenched a fist. He glared at Pitch Black with fierce hazel eyes. "What do you want, exactly?"

"Oh, it's nothing much. I only require some of your sand is all." Pitch walked towards his target, smirk clear on his face.

"Never." The time keeper answered plainly. "I would rather die than risk an imbalance of something so precious as time." Kali puffed out her feathers, in an attempt to scare fear itself.

"I was afraid you'd say that, I really was." Pitch sighed. "Because that can be arranged."

With a snap of Pitch's fingers, the Nightmares leapt to life and charged towards Father Time. Whinnies accompanied the clopping of their hooves. Yellow eyes bore onto their prey, showing no mercy in the slightest.

"Kali, go!" Father Time shook his shoulder and catapulted the bird off of him, allowing her a quicker takeoff as she vanished into one of the many small holes within the walls that were used by she and her fellow birds. Her master glared at his attackers and shot out an arm that was quickly followed by tiny trickles of his silver sands. Somehow, the minuscule amount of sand birthed a scythe for their commander that he took into battle against the Nightmares. A swing of the scythe sliced through one of the black horses and it disintegrated back into the state of black grains. Another swing, this time the target was missed; the same result from two more failed strikes that the Nightmares easily evaded. A kick met Father Time's back and a bite went to the calf of his right leg.

Though difficult in his weakened state, he managed to escape the bite and gain distance between himself and the Nightmares staring him down. Sliding a shaking hand down the scythe, he scraped grains of silver onto the tips of his fingers. Quickly, he commanded them to meet in his palm and he tightly clenched a fist. The Nightmares jumped for him.

There was stillness once more. But, this time, it soothed Father Time. He opened his previously shut eyes. The room around him was in a state of suspended animation, though he remained the same. He studied the horses as they moved only slightly in that instance, his fist still clenched. "It really is a shame I have to destroy something so fascinating." He pouted before stepping out of their paths. He peered around his library and found two things out of place. He could not find Pitch or the book he was holding in his

hands.

Neighs began to sound at a turtle's pace behind him. Time was returning to normal as the sand dissolved in his hand. Father Time gripped his weapon and released his fist. He watched as the action intended for him was carried out to an empty space that was surrounded by the remaining four Nightmares. Shocked by their goal not being met, the horses desperately glanced about the space, searching for him. In the confusion, Father Time scanned the library for signs of Pitch's presence and found the door leading down the hallway labeled for North America was cracked open, ever so slightly. As soundlessly as he could, he rushed into the corridor and raced to the other side. The neighs of the Nightmares grew closer as he raced back to the room with the giant hourglass and came to a screeching halt.

There was Pitch. Just standing there, staring at the trickling sand inside of it. Slowly, he raised a grey hand to the glass. "How much would I need from you?" He muttered to himself.

"Don't you dare touch that hourglass!" Pitch swiveled on his heels and took Father Time; scythe poised to strike and rage in his eyes, in his sight once more.

"How did you get here; I thought you were occupied?"

"I'm very resourceful under pressure." Father Time snarled. "Step away from that and maybe we can settle this like gentlemen."

Pitch lowered his hand back to his side and stared blankly at his opposition. The slightest evil grin showed on his face. "No." The Nightmares stomped into the room. The horse in front of the others snorted in resentment and the encircled their king's could-be attacker. "Take care of him until my business is done here." Pitch commanded.

The Nightmares stomped and shuffled their hooves against the ancient granite floors. Father Time deeply inhaled, tightening the grip on his weapon until his knuckles turned white, and swung his scythe almost like he was on auto-pilot. Evading the attacks thrown at him, he put up a much better fight now that he knew the stakes were higher than anticipated. Pitch getting his hands on his sand was something he would never allow, as long as he could help it. He whisked his bludgeon through the air but that's also all that he managed to hit. He could feel his scythe get weaker with every swing as it began to fall apart. He simply didn't have enough silver powder to maintain his weapon of choice. He knew that, but he had to fight on. He just had to.

One more swing; this one was a hit. The scythe destroyed one more horse before it finally gave way and went back to simply being sand, retreating inside his coat. Father Time's expression hit the floor within an instant. His power was used up for the time being; he was defenseless now.

"Such a shame." Pitch sighed. "And you were putting up such a fight."

Father Time turned to the Boogeyman with a stiff glare. "Who said that the fight was over?" The black horses surrounded him, snouts and

eyes flaring with a great hunger that he would hate to admit he was satisfying at that moment. He balled his fists and crouched, preparing for a strike by the Nightmaresâ€| but it never came. He glanced up and around and noticed no Nightmares around him. Only he and Pitch remained in the room.

"I admire how hard-headed you are." Pitch approached Father Time with an effortless stride. "But you may want to pick your fights more wiselyâ€| in time."

A harsh blow to the time keeper's head propelled him to the stone floor, leaving him gasping for breath. All at once, the walls and ceiling became one. The rich reds, golds and silvers merged into one confusing spiral that faded to black. Faint hooves clicking on the floor sounded through the ringing in his ears.

"And thank you for your hospitality. It's much appreciated." Pitch's smooth voice chimed with an eerie echo. Then a crash, glass shattering, retreating footsteps and a whoosh sounded within seconds of one another. Thenâ€| darkness... silence.

The world began to come back into focus with the fluttering of exhausted eyes. Father Time rose from his place on the ground, rubbing his silver eyes with a painful groan and his world became a whole image once againâ€| but it was far from a lovely scene to awaken to. His gaze immediately turned to the hourglass in the center of the space, which now had a gaping hole in the top of it; shards of its glass and piles of silver sand covered the surrounding floor. The hourglass' keeper gaped in shock at the sight before him. With adrenaline beginning to subside, he felt a harsh throbbing coming from the back of his head. He ran a hand over the source of the throbbing and gently rubbed it. He pulled his hand back in front of him to reveal the slightest traces of blood on his fingertips.

"This cannot be happeningâ€|" Father Time worriedly stated; letting out a wince at the pain he felt enslaving his body. "Kali!" He called as he began to lift the fallen sand from the ground with a flick of his hand. The black bird swooped down to her master with five other crows in tow, each carrying a significantly smaller hourglass in their talons. "Good, very good. Late is better than never, right?" He divided the silver power among the five containers and the lids closed when they had their fills. "Set those by my desk. We're going to have company." Father Time stumbled to the far wall and slid part of the wall aside, revealing a lever. He pulled it down, causing a beam of light to escape from the skylight. The light transformed into the aurora borealis, which fanned out over the skyline of Italy. He watched the lights dance, worry in his silvery irises. "Please hurryâ€| pleaseâ€|" He shifted his gaze to the broken glass littering the floor. "I had better find out what that madman wanted with that magic, Manny." He rushed to the hourglass and started at the sand that was still falling inside. "If I couldn't protect it this round, I'm not letting Pitch use another grain."

2. Guardians Reunite

New chapter finally! Sorry this took so long to update, guys. School and finals kept me busy and my other fic kind of needed an update too. But it's here now~! :D

Oh, and I'm sorry but don't expect an update next week. Hijack week on Tumblr is the week afterwards and I REALLY have to work on my prompts for that. If you want, you can read those prompts during Hijack week on my Tumblr account: [Purplerose128](#) (same as on here. :P)

And thanks to all of the reviews, favorites and follows on this story. They all make me smile and giggle like an idiot. :P I hope you like this chapter!

* * *

><p>"Snow day!" Jack shouted from the air as he began to send a blanket of snow down on Burgess. The sun hadn't begun to show in the sky yet and, when it did, Jack intended for it to be blocked out by the clouds that he created to dust the town in his white flakes of fun. He free fell from his high altitude, leading a gust of frosty wind behind him as he sped straight down in a tiny fit of joyous laughter. It had been nearly a year since the young spirit of winter became a Guardian and he was finally graced with the pleasure of seeing his first believers for the first time since spring forced the eternally drifting youth from the place he considered home.</p>

His descent toward the ground below propelled icy wind into his face and ran through his wind-whipped white hair in the best possible way. The way the ice lingering in the air seemed to kiss his pale skin as he moved was always a magical feeling, despite it being a near daily experience for him. Dragging his winds along with him, Jack swerved through the streets and sidewalks he passed; giving some spots a touch of ice and making some unfortunate souls slip on them for his pure enjoyment as he flew. Jack tapped his staff to the windows of the shops and apartments, dressing each one with his best frosted ferns yet (but he had always said that about his patternsâ€œ every year) and finally found his desired destination within his sights.

He swooped into a landing atop one of his favorite places in the city: the Bennett household. Jack leapt down from the snow coated roof and peered inside from a windowsill. Behind the frost forming on the glass, Jack watched a soundly sleeping Jamie relish in the last few hours of the dreams that Sandy had created for the young boy the night before. A small smile was etched on his face and the slow rise and fall of his chest were the only signs that the child was even still alive, as his body hung limp yet solid as a rock underneath the layers of blankets covering him.

"You're gonna love this, kid." Jack chuckled as he began to inscribe on the icy window pane "Jack was here," with some difficulty because he had to write it backwards so that Jamie could properly read the little note from the warmth of his room.

The winter spirit didn't move from his place when his was done writing the message. Rather, he just sat for a moment longer and watched the boy sleep. There was something that Jack loved about every emotion that a child expressed and the look that Jamie presented in his slumber was quietly screaming peace. It reassured Jack that the day was going to be worth it, knowing that he could spend the day having a snowball fight and playing games with Jamie and all of his friends; not having to do anything else. It had been a few weeks since Jack started a good snowball fight anywhere and he

really needed one soon or else he would start a blizzard out of pure boredom.

Then, Jack's train of thought was interrupted by the color that started to dance on the ice in front of him. The shades shifted from pinks to blues, mixing in tints of purple and the occasional glimmers of green and orange, bringing Jack to turn his gaze towards the source behind him. The flares of light danced overhead, creating a stunning sight to compliment the brightening sky that began to welcome the sun's highest point back over the horizon. But the young Guardian's admiration of the lights was short-lived to the extreme. To humans, the sight was something wonderful to behold; a spectacle that should be on everyone's bucket list to see. But the Guardians and all other mythical creatures within this world knew far better. The auroras appearing in the sky were their warning siren. Something really bad had to be going on for it to be shining that brightly at such an early hour of the morning. And, as much as Jack regretted leaving Jamie to enjoy the snow day he created without a welcome, the Guardian swiftly gripped hold of his staff and soared after the source of the lights.

Jack followed the beams of color without question as the wind carried him to their source. Though, he did begin to wonder who had sent the call when he began to cross the Atlantic Ocean. It was far too south for North to have called them, yet too northwards for Bunnymund to have either. It may have been Tooth, but then Jack would be pretty much flying around the world to get to Tooth Palace. And he wasn't even sure if Sandy even had a lair to send the signal from in the first place. Jack always assumed he did, but he had never been to it, if it happened to exist after all. Then, the winter sprite came to a setting all too familiar to him. The lights were coming from one of his favorite year-round playgrounds: the Himalayas. The mountains were really the only place, besides to North and South Poles, that pretty much constantly had snow on them. In fact, they were the only spots on the map that Jack could use his powers on all year long, when he wasn't busy bringing winter to other parts of the world. Jack had even spotted North around these particular peaks from time to time with a few of his yetis, most likely just getting a chance to stretch their legs after a long day of making toys. It was quite amusing when one of those outings would occur and people would later enlighten others on the vague glimpse of a yeti that they managed to snag on a hike. Jack always found it amusing how no one every seemed to believe the real believers of the world.

The lights took him into one of the warmer parts of the mountains, where the snow and ice were slimly on the tips of the rock structures. Jack floated about the epicenter of the lights' source and found the entrance to an area hidden from people for great reasons but he himself had never had the pleasure of exploring it himself: the home of Father Time. It was strange how the guy looked like he lived in ruins. This wasn't exactly what Jack had pictured someone like Father Time choosing to live in. But, for sure, the place looked as ancient as the man claims to be.

On the other side of the aged doors, though, Jack was taken aback by the polished air of the space. The marble doors revealed the true essence of the residence, closing Jack within the walls of the regal library before him. Now Jack could see why the outside had to be so misconceiving. A place as elegant as this would draw in any believer that may or may not be looking upon the mountains. It was the perfect

plan; hiding in plain sight. The dark wood shelves lined the walls and the bold red carpet felt almost like a pillow below his bare feet. Jack glanced about the room and noticed four familiar figures surrounding a table at the far end of the room, in front of yet more doors. Tooth turned her head to see who had entered the room and waved over for Jack to meet them. He complied and floated to the other Guardians' sides.

"Took you long enough, Frost." Bunny scoffed.

"I got a little distracted." Jack shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly.

"Good." North stated, his back turned to the others "Now that Jack is here, we can get down to business."

"Thank you." An unfamiliar voice sighed with relief.

Jack raised an eyebrow at the new interjection. Who was that? He silently asked himself. His question was answered when North stepped beside Sandy, who was looking in the large man's general direction with concern on his face, and revealed the origin of the new voice. Jack had to admit that, yet again, this was not what he was expecting at all. The person before them, who he was assuming was Father Time, was far from what Jack's imagination had come up with for his image. He was much younger looking than Jack had thought he would, bearing striking silver eyes behind frames of glasses and a head of messy chocolate brown hair. He had his hands shoved into a brown trench coat, tied closed. And, overall, he looked far less than thrilled with them all being in his home, an eyebrow raised at Jack, as though he thought the teen would break something if he wasn't watched.

"Jack, you two haven't met, no?" North asked.

"No, we haven't." Jack replied.

"I am Chronos." The mysterious man declared "Or, as others have come to call me, Father Time. You are?"

"Jack Frost." Jack answered.

Chronos held out a hand. "Pleasure." After briefly staring at the man's hand, noticing a slight coating of blood on it, and shook it half heartedly. "Now, if you'd follow me, I'll show you what has happened around here."

Without another word, Chronos opened the door he was directly behind and lead his five guests down a hallway of marked doors. Jack's reading had grown rusty in his three hundred years of not having to do so, but he recalled some of the spellings. "Massachusetts" "Connecticut" "Virginia," all of them states that Jack had grown up and spent so much time around both in life and after his death.

"As you can tell," Chronos continued "The corridors are, thankfully, unharmed. The problem is still massive, though, because of what is damaged." They groups came to the other end of the hallway and came into the light of the center of the library. But the sight was far from grand. In the middle of the room was a humongous broken hourglass, being repaired slowly by a small flock of crows that were

picking up the shattered pieces on the ground and flying off with smaller hourglasses of silver sand that was being taken from the damaged one. "It's terrible that I have to do this to the poor thing." Chronos sighed "I only hope everything stays stable long enough for us to repair it." He placed a delicate hand on the cracked glass and closed his eyes, almost as if he was trying to share the pain between himself and the hourglass.

"Oh my gosh." Tooth gasped, cupping a hand around her mouth with wide eyes.

"It's worse than we thought." Bunny muttered, in shock himself.

Sandy floated over to Chronos and patted him on the back. The pair looked at each other and Sandy created the image of a thumbs up above his head, assuring him that it would be alright.

"Was any stolen, Chronos?" North questioned.

"I'm afraid so." He answered, disheveled at the thought "And so is one of my books."

"By who?" Tooth added on, Sandy assisting her with a question mark appearing over his head.

"The Boogeymanâ€|" Chronos chocked out after a long pause.

All other faces became those of shock.

"How is that possible?" Inquired Tooth.

"We took him out." Bunny assured.

"He escaped from his lair." Chronos answered "And now he'll use my sands and my history books for things I don't want to imagine."

"Not if we can help it." Jack stepped forward "We stopped him before and we'll do it again."

"It may not be that simple, Jack." North proclaimed "With that sand, Pitch can travel through time. He can be anywhere, at any time right now."

"That may be the only good thing about him taking my book." Chronos turned back to them. "Follow me." He led the Guardians back down the corridor they came from and back to the main part of the library. "When Pitch came here, I was re-reading one of my books on the Viking period. This precise book is the one that was taken. That is most likely where he is right now."

"But how are we going to get to him?" Jack asked.

"That is why you'll need these." Chronos gestured to a set of five hourglasses small enough the carry in one's pocket on a desk, each filled to the rim with silver sand. "This sand was spilt from my hourglass; it has the power to travel through great distances of time. I will allow you each to take one of these with you and travel to that time period to bring Pitch back." Each Guardian stepped forward and took an hourglass for themselves. "But be warned, time is much more fragile than you may think. Every decision must be made

carefully, for you could alter everything that follows by one simple action at the wrong moment. You must take Pitch out of this time before he accomplishes this on his own."

"Thank you." Tooth smiled.

"Anything to maintain order." Chronos plainly stated. "Are you ready to depart now or would you need to prepare?"

The Guardians glanced from one to another quizzically, with the occasional nod.

North spoke up. "We will need time to make preparations, yes. We will all return within an hour to travel."

At that, he removed a snow globe from his coat, whispered to it and stepped through the portal it formed, taking him to his workshop. Bunny tapped his foot the floor and jumped down one of his tunnels while Tooth and Sandy darted out the skylight, leaving Jack and Chronos alone.

"You're not leaving?" Father Time asked.

"I have everything I own right here." Jack tapped his crook against his leg. "No prep needed here."

"Ah." Chronos replied; a tad displeased at Jack's statement.

Jack rolled his eyes at the tone of Father Time's response. It wasn't like he was going to destroy his precious library or anything; he was a Guardian, after all. He knew better.

Though, that position didn't last very long in the eternal teen's mind. This visit slowly added pressure onto Chronos; a horrible encounter with Pitch Black topped off by basically having to babysit a rather active (and bored) Jack Frost. His child-like curiosity had taken form not long after the pair had drifted into an awkward silence, which resulted in the boy exploring the immediate area and periodically asking his host questions on what he saw throughout the space. This part wasn't particularly wrong to the keeper of time. In fact, he enjoyed informing Jack on his basic purpose of maintaining the delicate balance of time and that the knowledge in his library only grew as the world continued to rotate and take form. It was when Jack became uninterested in the apparent lecture the man was giving that he began to be a problem. The winter spirit had begun to float about the space and leap between the tops of the bookshelves that weren't part of the walls. The time keeper even started thinking that Jack was somehow part cat, by the way that he was leaping about so carefree and didn't seem to listen to any cry to come down. Chronos' heart almost stopped when Jack took a jump from one shelf top to another and the one he used as a springboard began to teeter. But, thankfully, it slowed and wobbled back into place within a moment. Only then could he breathe decently again.

It was a relief when the other four Guardians had finally returned and Jack returned to their side. One nightmare was over; now the other one just had to be rooted out.

North had returned first, equipped with his twin blades and a knapsack that Jack could probably fit inside, if he tried. Tooth came

back next, with a few of her fairies and a sack tied to a belt that was now around her waist. Bunny and Sandy appeared almost simultaneously. Sandy had a small sack slung over his shoulder and Bunny had obviously equipped with more weaponry than usual onto his leather holster. It appeared that everyone was finally ready for the journey they were about to embark on.

"We are ready, Chronos." North declared. "What must we do?"

"Take your hourglasses in your hands." Father Time started. As they were told, each Guardian removed their hourglass from where they were keeping it. "Now, they actually work rather similarly to your snow globe system, North. Each hourglass contains enough sand for two trips to and from the time period I've predicted Pitch to be within as we speak. All you have to do is flip them over, to trigger the sand, and say where and when you would like to be."

"Sounds easy enough." Jack commented. "Let's go."

"Alright then." Chronos cheered "Flip them over and repeat after me."

* * *

><p>The isle of Berk was more lively than normal on that day for one reason: the approach of Snoggletog. All across the tiny island Vikings and their dragons were decking out the village with decorations and groups of children were playing in the snow, a few Terrible Terrors mixing in with their games. Hiccup and Toothless had been wandering through the square for a few moments before spotting Astrid passing out yet another round of yaknog. Hopefully this year's batch would be better than the previous year's. He tried to avoid being in her sight for the time being; he really didn't want to be sucked into sampling her drink again. She meant well, he knew that. But he would much rather do everything he could to keep himself from having to choke down more curdled yak milk. Though, he wouldn't turn it down if she did corner him to do so.

Then, the square suddenly became less populated. Just as the last decorations had been set up on the outside of the buildings, all of the dragons, besides Toothless, took off into the sky and left their trainers behind. The Vikings were less depressed about it this time around though, as they knew where the dragons were going and that they would return in time. It was the time of year where the dragons all set off to a far off island for them to lay their eggs, as Hiccup had discovered the year before.

"There they go, Bud." Hiccup muttered. Toothless replied with a subtle roar as he watched the other dragons become smaller on the horizon. "I could always make that tail for you again, if you want to go with them, you know." The dragon nudged his trainer gently, though still causing him to lose his footing for a second. "Guess not, huh?" Hiccup rested his hand on the dragon's snout. "They'll be back soon, anyway. It's not like they'll miss much."

3. Welcome to Berk

Yes, both my fics are off of hiatus now! Yay! :D **I guess I'll explain my sudden absence with this story to you guys too, only

fair.**

I haven't been updating the past few weeks because, as I'm sure some of you know, the past week was Hijack week on Tumblr and I wanted to participate. So the past two weeks, I've been reading and writing prompts for the days of Hijack Week as well as putting more effort into my Hiccup cosplay for Connecticon, which is next week. Sorry about that, but Hijack Week called me. (Plus, last week wasn't my best week this summer so... I wasn't very motivated, to say the least.)

Anyway, this chapter's a little bit short but it's more of a transition chapter than anything. It sets up for later, basically. I will get back on the ball with my stories, don't worry. But I promise nothing with update dates because some days I spontaneously get a life and stuff happens where I can't write that day. But I'll do my best. Enjoy!

* * *

><p>The shores of Berk were calmer as Snoggletog grew closer to its arrival. Some thought it was the work of a more tranquil atmosphere that emitted from every Viking on the island around that time of year while others, mostly Mildew, suggested it was now because they could "go back to their roots and remember how well they did without the dragons around." The residents were, truthfully, more at ease during this time of year, as a side effect of the cheer and hospitable natures that normally would lay dormant inside of the rugged warriors until the decorations were hoisted up and Stoick broke out only the best mead for the celebrations to come. But another contribution to the calmness of the island itself was none other than the cold that came with every Viking's favorite holiday. During this point of devastating winter, it often grew so frigidly cold that the ocean froze over in places when the water stilled for the slightest time frame. The frozen waters and waves were truly one of the many great spectacles to add to the gorgeous scenery that the otherwise unappealing mound of rock had to offer. It presented a perfect backdrop to the winter festivities that were under preparation. Now, though, the tasks were performed with fewer numbers and more hands than talons. With the dragons, excluding Toothless, on their way to lay their eggs, the village would be significantly quieter and tamer.</p>

This time also served as a bit of a break for Hiccupâ€| a break that he often wished he didn't have. Sure, it gave the young dragon trainer plenty of free time for him to do as he pleased. But what Hiccup truly loved was being surrounded by the dragons at all times, like he was very well adapted to. With the dragons, the boy had a very well respected place within his homeland. He was wanted, needed, loved by the village and the dragons alike. And, at times, the absence of the dragons brought Hiccup back to the point in time where he was just the village klutz. Back to when he was cooped up in the house or the forge during every single raid because the town feared the path of destruction he unintentionally brought with him into the open. Back to when he was shunned by his peers for not being capable of so much as lifting an axe without toppling over by its weight. He was mentally taken back toâ€| when he wasn't considered a Viking. Toothless may never leave his side but that didn't change Hiccup's feeling of being useless all over again. The dragons gave him purpose. What was his purpose when they were missing? His only answer

was that even the "Dragon Conqueror" needed a few weeks to take time for himself and nothing could be done about it.

Reluctantly, Hiccup took this vacation in stride and tried to let himself relax for once. It was almost foreign for him to do so; he almost lived off of the unpredictability of the dragons and everyone in the dragon academy. Toothless had awoken his rider bright and early, as he always did, for their morning flight. And, for once, hearing the thumps of his companion on the rooftop brought him joy more powerful than his usual morning grogginess. This should be interesting! he thought as he mounted Toothless and the pair took off into the pink and orange hues of sunrise, the first day of Hiccup's break. The jet black of the Night Fury still subtly blended in with the higher points in the sky that still blushed deep blues and purples and were lightly speckled with the stars that desperately retreated from contact with the light of day. If there was one great thing about being dragged out of bed before anyone else on Berk, it was the fact that Hiccup could splendor in the way the sky looked each day. It never looked the same twice, yet it was always beautiful.

And, to the young Viking's surprise, the sky had a fantastic surprise in store for his eyes during this particular flight on Toothless. After about a half hour of soaring through the frost bitten air, the heavens opened above the pair with a faint clap and a flash of brightness. The uncommon sight of light dancing with the clouds and the fading crescent moon were painted across the world above, reflecting in Hiccup's bright green eyes. He had always wondered exactly what those hues were and why they appeared. The boy remembers asking his father about them once and being told that they were nothing special; just something that happens in the archipelago and nothing more. But Hiccup knew that those lights must have held some kind of higher meaning. They had to be more than just something cool to look at.

* * *

><p>Upon the opening of the tunnel through time, the five Guardians emerged into this new land on a ride down the auroras; Jack, Tooth and Sandy riding the variants of pink and blue with ease while North and Bunny had to succumb to the rises and falls of the uneven slope. And man, did Bunny hate every second of that ride on the crazy rainbow road in the air. Momentarily, the lights faded away and the Guardians floated, or fell, onto the cold snow that covered the landscape of the new territory.</p>

"Now that," Jack dusted his hoodie off "that was fun." He looked at Sandy, who gave him a thumbs up.

"Maybe for you, frostbite." Bunny barked, once he successfully freed himself from the mound of snow that he landed in "Why is it that every time we get summoned somewhere it's always freezing?!"

"Is not so bad." North interjected, dusting the snow off of his coat "Warmer than the Pole."

"Not by much!" Bunny muttered under his breath. He took his small hourglass out of his holster and scanned the contents, finding half of the sand to be gone. "Well, at least the loon was right about something."

"Hey!" Jack called "The guy's been alone for hundreds of years. When you're secluded long enough, anyone can go nuts."

Tooth flew up above the trees, in an effort to pinpoint where they were. All she saw was small islands and ocean for miles in all directions, maybe a boat or two off in the distance performing whatever task they were assigned. Strange, though. This blank looking landscape wasn't exactly what she imagined this place would be like. Or, at least, she expected to see a village or castle on a hill or something to point them towards where Pitch was headed.

"Tooth!" North's voice distantly echoed "What do you see?!"

Upon hearing North's shout, she rushed back down to her companions. "Looks like a pretty small placeâ€¦ and I don't really see any settlements anywhere. Why would Pitch come here?"

"That's why we're here." Jack stated "We have to find out exactly what's going on and stop him."

Sandy waddled in front of his colleagues and made the form of a house above his head, a question mark soon accompanying it.

"I think Sandy's right here, mate." Bunny affirmed "We should find a hideout or we'll be sitting ducks out here."

"You scared, cottontail?" Jack jeered with a smirk slipping onto his face.

Bunny's face turned sour as he faced the boy "You know what's in this time period, Frost?" He interrogated. Jack was silent "Dragons. A whole mess of 'em. And I'd rather not meet one while it's trying to eat us in the middle of the night because we're exposed prey." He took a stride deeper into the woods and looked over his shoulder. "Anyone else care to last longer than a night?"

Tooth and Sandy followed the large rabbit without question; apparently they were on the same page with the "dragons are dangerous" thing. For Jack, it took a gentle pat on the back from North to get him to come along and take him out of his thought of always wanting to see a real, live dragon. Though, it didn't go far from his mind and was soon the focus of the guardian of fun's attention. He had always wondered what they looked like- what they really looked like. Sure, he'd seen them depicted in a lot of books that Jamie had shown him. They were even in pictures of the young boy's history book for school, which the eternal teen only knew because Jamie thought someone immortal like Jack would have been around for medieval timesâ€¦ not true for the boy born in the English colonies. That's also how Jack's first believer learned of the Guardian's past life and how he became a Guardian in the first place. Yeah, those memories were a lot of fun to dig up again. If there was one thing that jack wanted to do while they were in this time, it was at least see a dragon for himself.

The quintet of Guardians wandered in the unfamiliar forests for hours, North taking head of the pack to slash his comrades an open path with his twin blades. Jack had never pictured Vikings living in a place like this. Everywhere he looked there were monstrously tall trees coated in snow, which meant that the absence of winter in the

land must have brought the thickest greenery outside the Amazon with it. And the winter spirit couldn't help but admire the white blanket over the island he was treading on. That was when he began to wonder who brought the snow before he did? And what happened to that person when Jack became Jack Frost? Whoever he was, he was great at his job. Jack was even envious of the amount of snow he saw. If he ever unleashed blizzards large enough to do this much, he might get an earful from Manny himself about how "irresponsible" that was of him.

But there was one detail that surprised Jack. Throughout the whole walk thus far, there was never even a sign of a dragon to be seen or heard at all. Bunny said that the place was teeming with the reptiles. So where were they? Were they nocturnal or something? Did none of them live on this particular island? It was pretty confusing.

"So, Bunny," Jack smirked "Where are your hoards of dragons?"

The rabbit's shoulders squared "Hell if I know. But if they're avoidin' us, let's keep it that way."

Jack rolled his eyes.

"Aha!" North bellowed "I think we found it!" The rest of the group crowded around the large man and glanced to where he was casting his gaze. They had stumbled to the entrance to a decent sized cave that was carved out of a hill. It looked like they had found their hideout.

"Alright, let's go check it out." Tooth suggested before rushing inside herself. "Wow!" Her voice chimed with an echo "Come look at this!"

The male members of the group and looked to each other with a shrug. Sandy was the first to follow the Guardian of Memories inside. The other three quickly followed suit and re-joined the Sandman and Tooth Fairy inside, awestruck at what was before them. The cave, though small in size, harbored a waterfall that created a tiny pond surrounding it.

"It must have been made from the melting snow or something." Tooth sighed "It's warmer in here."

Bunny stepped towards the pond and entered it, only finding the water to come up to his ankles. "This should work nicely." He chuckled "We'll set us base here."

"Great!" North slung his massive bag off of his shoulder and allowed it to make a small crash onto the hard dirt ground. "Shall we go explore a little bit? Maybe figure out where Pitch went?"

"Sounds good to me." Jack chimed.

"So, should we split up?" Tooth inquired "We could cover more ground that way."

Sandy nodded and formed a moon above his head, shrugging.

"Yes, we all should meet back here by dark." North ordered "We can't

risk anything with Pitch roaming around."

The Guardians all exchanged looks before exiting the cave and parting in separate directions.

* * *

><p>After a good few hours of flying on Toothless, Hiccup landed his dragon by the now closed Berk Dragon Academy. The boy had arranged to meet with his fellow dragon riders that afternoon for a regular meeting.</p>

He still wasn't quite used to the lack of dragons and felt an initial shock when none of his friends had their dragons. Then he rememberedâ€| _Rightâ€| they're all goneâ€|_

"About time, Hiccup." Snotlout moaned "We've been waiting on you, here."

"I know, I'm sorry." Hiccup started "I lost track of time, I guess."

"Of course you did." Ruffnut muttered "You still have your dragon."

"Why are we even here?" Tuffnut interjected "We can't practice or anything without the dragons."

"I called this meeting" Hiccup continued "Because my dad gave us an important job for the Snoggletog festivities tomorrow night. He's put us all in charge of entertaining the kids this year." Snotlout groaned and Tuffnut made a face. Astrid, though, smiled. "Come on, it's not that hard. All we have to do is keep an eye on them and read them some stories. It's not the end of the world. Fishlegs, you still have your book of lore, right?" Hiccup looked around the arena, but didn't see his friend "Does anybody know where Fishlegs is?"

"Last time I saw him was yesterday." Astrid admitted "It's not like him to be late."

Just then the Viking in question staggered into the arena, looking rather pale and even more nervous than normal. His limbs were shaking like dead branches gripping for life and sweat coated his brow.

"Whoah" Tuffnut gasped "What happened to you?"

"You look like you've seen the full wrath of Thor." His sister added on.

"I might as well have." Fishlegs stuttered before his weak legs gave out beneath him and he fell onto his backside with a quiet whimper.

Hiccup was the first to his side, gently clutching his larger friend's shoulder "Fishlegs, what happened?"

Fishlegs gulped "I had the _worst_ nightmare last night, Hiccupâ€|"

4. Festival of Pain

YES, FOR ONCE I HAVE A LONG CHAPTER WITH ALMOST NO BS IN IT AT ALL! I hope the frequent POV change doesn't confuse anyone. I know there's a lot of it in this chapter but... it was needed for the effect that I wanted.

**This chapter got out so quickly because this chapter is the original oneshot that I wrote for this title and I edited it to better fit the story. Because the way Jack and Hiccup first "meet" per se is exactly the same. I don't have much else to say other than it is 1 AM and I stayed up even though I'm tired because I wanted to get this done so that I can cry over how I'm stuck on my other ongoing fic~! Yay! **

I'll start doing that now while you get reading... thanks again for the reviews and stuff that you guys do for this story. I love it all. :)

* * *

><p>Pitch looked on from the spectator's seating of the now closed fighting arena, watching in enjoyment and the chubby blond Viking's fear. Though small in source, his stimulated nerves brought a sense of strength that had become almost foreign to the Nightmare King in his approximate year in pitiful exile. The sad thing, though, was that Pitch had barely tried anything on this child. After all, he was merely a first taste of these scared-of-nothing Vikings. That first sample didn't exactly appeal to the being of fear at all. Hopefully, the rest of the tribe would be harder to prey on than the boy whose dragon made a habit of licking his feet while he slept. Despite how revoltingly easy it was to gain this small spike of power, he relished it as it took hold of him and made his amber eyes glow a little brighter. It was amusing how he felt just as energized in the middle of the day as he now did in the light. Pitch peered over the group of concerned and flustered teenagers, wondering if this collection of minds would be the best candidates for him to become even more powerful.<p>

* * *

><p>The island of Berk was bustling with excitement and joy all throughout the next day. The Great Hall was busily prepped for the celebrations that were only hours away from taking place, every capable member of the tribe pitching in. Inside the Great Hall, Hiccup and Toothless were on fire duty. Since the black dragon was the fastest way to light the large fire pit inside the building, the two were placed to gather enough kindling and logs to keep the blazes going into the wee hours of the morning, when the last stragglers finally left the party out of exhaustion. Hiccup was used to doing busy work, so he really didn't mind too much. After all, he wasn't special anymore until the dragons came back with their hatchlings.<p>

They returned from foraging about two hours before the party officially started, and yet half the village was still inside already. The freckled Viking rolled his eyes in a lack of surprise and he and his dragon lugged the last load of wood over the pile. Hiccup set up the first feed for the fire and Toothless ignited it

effortlessly. Hiccup took a seat not far from the warmth of the fire and looked about the scene, smiling at everyone coming together for the evening. He missed the dragons roaming around, but it was nice to remember what Berk looked like before the dragons called the frozen island home as well. The last dragon on Berk curled up next to him and Hiccup, for once, couldn't feel more relaxed.

* * *

><p>Hiccup remained at peace for the rest of those two hours, for the most part. The occasional conversation he stroke up did bring him back to reality, but every face he met was welcomed openly. At least people were still talking to him. Maybe he was wrong, after all. He might have respect on his own, now that people accepted him.</p>

Not long after the festival officially started, Astrid and Fishlegs were the first ones to arrive.

Hiccup finally noticed when they sat at his table and greeted them. "Fishlegs, did you bring the book?" He asked

"Right here." Fishlegs took a large book with a beat up leather cover out from under his arm and handed it to his smaller companion.

"Perfect." Hiccup smiled at his friend "I knew I could count on you."

"No problem." Fishlegs replied. Though he seemed calmer than the day before, the book worm was obviously still nervous about the nightmare he'd had the night before. He wouldn't say too much about what he saw within it, but everyone could tell that whatever it was terrified him. Hiccup decided to ignore it. After all, he knew better than anyone that everyone has nightmares from time to time.

Snotlout arrived fashionably late, finding the three that were actually interested in this story telling thing with their noses buried in the old village story book. "You're already looking through that?" He interrogated "We still have hours before we have to read anything to them."

"We're seeing which line-up we want now so we don't have to flip through the whole thing while we're up there." Astrid answered "That way, we have more room for more stories because we didn't waste time flipping through the book for one that they didn't hear last year." At that, Snotlout sat next to Hiccup and started filtering through the pages with them.

After they had selected about four legends, Hiccup averted his attention from the pages. "Has anyone seen Tuffnut and Ruffnut?"

The other three shook their heads.

"Not since we left the meeting yesterday." Astrid admitted.

"Same here." Snotlout added, after an obnoxious burp from chugging down another mug of yak nog. He looked down at the cup with a grimace "They said they're running out of the stuff."

"I wonder why." Hiccup drawled. Snotlout shot him a glare, which went

ignored by his cousin.

Finally, minutes before the teens were set to tell their selected tales, the missing Thorston twins slipped into the Great Hall and tried to place themselves at the table without any suspicions arousing. This, however, did not go very successfully as their friends had been waiting and worried for hours by then.

"Guys, what happened?" Astrid jumped at them first "You're really late."

"It's not our fault." Tuffnut muttered.

"Then where were you?" Hiccup inquired.

"In our soggy placeâ€| hiding." Ruffnut shrugged.

"From who?" Snotlout scoffed. "We're Vikings, for Thor's sake; we don't hide from anythingâ€| unless you're Hiccup." Hiccup swatted his shoulder, which clearly didn't hurt him at all.

"It was only a dreamâ€|" Tuffnut mused "but it felt so real."

"A dream?" Fishlegs squeaked.

"Yeah." Ruffnut sighed "It sounds really stupid but that nightmare was so realâ€|"

"Mind explaining what it was about?" Astrid nudged.

"There was nothingâ€|" Ruffnut muttered, barely audible "I was alone."

"So was I." Tuffnut interjected.

"It was allâ€| black." Ruffnut narrated "And it surrounded me, closed me in. And thenâ€| before I woke upâ€| there were theseâ€| yellow things in the distance." Fishlegs tensed after hearing that "I think they were-"

"Eyes?" Fishlegs finally stuttered out. All eyes turned to him.

"How'd you know?" Tuffnut leaned forward, clearly interested.

"Because I saw those eyes tooâ€|" Fishlegs whispered, his voice cracking "in my nightmare."

The eyes that were all on Fishlegs glanced from one to another, only widening with time. They carried on in this state of confusion until Hiccup's distracted gaze caught the group of children gathering by the fire.

"Ok, listen." Hiccup ordered sternly, gaining everyone's attention "I think we need to sort this out later, as creepy as it is, because we have a job to do." He stood, books in his hands "Let's just push this aside for now, until we get this out of the way. We don't want to scare them, do we?" He gestured to the kids.

The group of teens all nodded in agreement and rose from their places at the table. They slowly made their way over to the group of children on the opposite end of the fire pit, who were anxiously waiting for the stories to start being told. As the teens sat before the kids, they all began to cheer.

"What stories are you guys gonna read us?" One little girl squealed.

"Is one a dragon story? Those are awesome!" A boy shouted.

"Alright, alright, settle down." Hiccup calmly said as he opened the leather book. The kids slowly grew silent and inched closer to the boy with the book.

* * *

><p>Another day of patrolling the islands around the one he and his companions had been calling home led Jack outside North's set perimeter of searching. The winter sprite had already searched his assigned direction fully and decided to expand upon it a little. This bit of rule bending seemed to pay off when he heard distant noise make its way into his ears. He followed the sound until he came across a small village on the island he was floating over. Looking around, Jack saw no one from the air. And there was no difference when he descended and let his bare feet welcome the frozen ground with a smile. Bunny may have hated this weather but Jack felt right at home in this place.</p>

_Where is that sound coming from? _Jack pondered. _It looks like no one's home. _He turned toward the largest structure that the village's inhabitants had built and noticed a dull light emitting out of the windows. _I wonder what's going on in thereâ€¦_ Jack hovered over the large staircase leading up the structure. He poked around the gigantic wooden door and decided that finding a different way inside would be easier than waiting for this behemoth to be opened. So, he wandered the perimeter until, to his surprise, found a window that was cracked open and slipped inside.

Jack, expectantly, went unnoticed in his entry. Of course no one could see him; Jack wasn't even born yet in this time. Hell, he didn't think America had been discovered yet in this time period. Though, somehow, the scene inside felt familiar to Jack. The massive space was packed with people; the whole village must have been contained within these walls. Lanterns were hung overhead, booths selling food, drink and other assorted things were set up along the far walls and a huge fire was burning in the center. It kind of reminded the invisible boy of the festivals he attended in the Colonies, before and after he became Jack Frost.

He strolled through the area for a few moments, taking in the adults' drunken antics and overhearing a few conversations relating to one common topic: a thing called Snoggletog, if Jack heard that right. He strode past a man with a long blond moustache, with reindeer antlers on his head and a large amount of bells glued onto a wooden plank that was where his hand was supposed to be, calling out to someone whose name Jack didn't catch.

Then, something else caught Jack's eye. He saw a massive form of black and a splash of red resting by the fire and a group of kids.

The winter spirit cautiously inched forward and saw that, in fact, this form was a dragon! A real, live dragon! At least, Jack hoped it was alive. He sighed with relief when it let out a grumble and shifted position. He couldn't believe this; he'd been all over the islands around this place and he didn't find a single dragon until he stumbled into a party packed to the rim with people. What was a dragon doing around so many humans? Jack was told that they would kill even the Guardians in an instant, as animals can see them undoubtedly. He stared in awe at this beautiful creature before him, admiring the giant retile's scales and wings, before something else gained his attention. This dragon was equipped with some serious gear. He had a saddle strapped on him and wires that trailed his body and back to a red tail fin that stood out against its black host. That's when it hit Jack: it only had one real tailfin. It couldn't fly without this equipment. That's why it was with people; because it needed them in order to survive. This thing couldn't fly, let alone go hunting or anything else dragons normally do by themselves or with a few friends.

Then, Jack turned his attention to the kids sitting nearby. It looked like they were waiting for something. What, was someone going to come over and see the future in the fire? Then, they all quickly turned their heads to a group of teenage Vikings coming over to them with a really large, heavy-looking book. Jack couldn't care less what they were saying to each other; he was focused on the shortest teen of the bunch. He had brown hair that seemed orange against the flames and he was coated in freckles. He took a seat on a table not far from the fire pit, next to a girl with a blonde braid and pale blue eyes and opened the book.

Upon getting closer to that particular pair, out of pure curiosity, Jack noticed the cover of the book the short, brown-haired kid was holding and smiled at the child-like drawing on the cover. "Fairy Tales, huh?" Jack chuckled "These I got to hear." Jack rested his staff against the table next to theirs and got comfortable on top of it.

Jack got a little more excited when the dropped his staff and sent a small chill throughout the immediate area. It even made the fire move with the breeze a little bit. The boy holding the book peered up at the sudden chill. He rolled his eyes and mumbled "Curse you, Jokul Frostiâ€|" Upon hearing one of his aliases, Jack paid even closer attention to the conversation about to start.

"Why don't we tell them that one first?" A blonde girl sitting next to him questioned.

"What one?" The freckled boy continued flipping through the book.

"Jokul Frosti; that was your favorite when we were kids."

He gave the girl a confused look "You sure? That one's not in the book."

"I'm sure, with all of us, we can piece it together."

The book was closed. "Alright." The boy sighed "How about you start then, Astrid?"

"This is going to be good." Jack muttered with a smile.

"Alright." Astrid stood. "Have you kids ever wondered what brings Berk all of this snow every year?" She pointed to the windows and the kids turned to see a very light snow falling outside before turning back to her, nodding. "Well, it's not a whatâ€| it's a who. His name is Jokul Frosti-"

"I thought it was Old Man Winter?" a lanky blond boy interrupted.

Jack glared at the kid and snarled "Old man? Really? I'm only three hundred and seventeen!" Being immortal had its perks, including not aging. Sometimes, it made Jack forget that most people his age are long past dead. Then again, he kind of was too...

"That is another name for himâ€|" A large boy with an almost timid voice added.

"What does he look like?" One of the little girls asked.

"You better not mess this up, kids." Jack mumbled.

"Oh, wellâ€|" the same boy stood before the group. "As his nickname implies, Jokul has the appearance of a rather old man. He has the ears of a troll that are barely visible due to his very long beard that matches his snow white hair."

Jack gave another confused look before sliding his hands down his chin. "I wish I had a beard..." Jack muttered. Next, he touched his ears. They weren't _that _big, were they? "What is this, my roasting?" Jack raised his voice, but was still unheard

"Don't forget my favorite part." The short one with freckles interjected "His paint brush and bucket, for painting the leaves brown."

"This has to be a joke." Jack stated "No wonder no one can see me around here; this is a bunch of crap. Painting leaves brown, that's almost as bad as that stupid nose nipping thing." Jack stood and walked over to the closest window, jumping up to rest on the windowsill. Upon his back touching part of the glass, frost ferns began to form.

Another blonde girl, who had been silent until now, glanced over her shoulder and noticed the ferns. Jack observed that she looked as thin as the boy next to her and dubbed them siblings. "I think he's listening, Hiccup."

"What?" Hiccup and everyone else turned to her.

"Aren't designs like that on windows a sign that Jokul's here?" Her brother implied.

"I think soâ€|" Hiccup smiled as the window was completely encased in frost.

"Too bad he's evil." A pudgy boy with a nose similar to a pig's exclaimed.

Jack jumped down from the window to get close to the group again.
"Evil...?"

"Why do you say that?" A young boy asked.

"Well, Gustav," he continued "He controls the snow. What happens if we get caught in the snow? We die." A sudden sternness emerged from the seemingly nonchalant Viking "The only time we're really safe from freezing to death is when Jokul hibernates three months of the year. The three months that we get hail instead of snow."

"Whatâ€| noâ€|" Jack stepped closer to the kids "I don't try toâ€| I meanâ€| winter's supposed to be fun."

"Alright, Snotlout," Hiccup spoke up "Stop making the kids afraid of winter. We have the strength to live through it ever year. Besides, just like the gods, he only behaves that way if he's mad. I think that he's pretty friendly and playful otherwise. I mean, he probably invented snowball fights."

"Something finally makes sense here!" Jack yelled in rejoice.

"Yeah, yeah, sure." Snotlout leaned against a table. "But it's what he does; no changing it."

That was it. Jack had heard enough. He tightly gripped his staff and trudged over to the Snotlout kid, who clearly lived up to his name, and prepared to strike him with his staff. At the worst, it would phase through the kid and he would get his anger out. At the best, it would hit him and that would mean someone in this place could see him. He firmed his grip and stared the back of his obnoxious head down for a minute before preparing to strike.

That is, until the dragon, who had been sleeping soundly until now, awoke and growled in Jack's immediate direction. The kids and teenagers all turned to the dragon's targeted area. Jack got his hopes upâ€| only for them to be let down. No one noted he was there; they all looked right through him. That agonizing feeling of being alone forever washed over Jack like a tidal wave. Panic rose in his system as the black beast sat up and his growl deepened. Without thinking, Jack whipped open the window he had frosted over and swooped as fast as he could away from the village and into the night.

* * *

><p>Hiccup couldn't really explain what had just occurred before them. One minute, Snotlout was beingâ€|. Snotlout and then the next minute Toothless is awake, growling intensely at the wall. At least, that's what Hiccup would like to think. But he could have sworn thatâ€| he saw someone there, only for a second, before he threw open the window and jumped through like he was flying. He rubbed his eyes a few times and, when no one else mentioned the boy, Hiccup assumed it had been the nostalgia affect from the story. That happens, right? Of course it does. It was just his childhood imagination coming back to haunt himâ€| again. He never did outgrow his belief in trolls, why not Jokul too?<p>

**Wow, this one's later than I thought it would be. Not by much, thank God but... still... **

I don't really have much to say this time around; I think this chapter will speak for itself.

Thanks for all of the reviews on this story so far; they've all made me smile and giggle. And thank you guys for liking my story. I didn't expect this to catch on as much as it has. ... But I kind of always say that so... I'll leave you to read now...

* * *

><p>Jack's flight back to the Guardians' makeshift headquarters was performed on auto-pilot. He wasn't entirely sure how he managed to get back to the unfamiliar space without getting lost; for his mind was pre-occupied with the so-called "legend" he had just heard about himself. Jack always knew that Jokul Frosti was one of his many worldwide names, but he had never heard the beliefs behind this alternate, far older version of himself before.</p>

He'd heard countless Jack Frost stories in his three hundred years of existence, with very few lasting longer than a few decades before they pattered away with history. This narrative shouldn't have been any news to the teen, really. When people hear about Jack Frost, they don't necessarily think of a tall, handsome teenage boy in a blue hoodie and sporting spiky white hair without a matching beard. He'd been called old before; he'd even been portrayed as dangerous because he's so carefree. One of Jack's personal favorite misconceptions about himself when Americans depicted him as a general who rode on a steed made of ice. Time certainly changed how people who couldn't even see him thought of him.

But thisâ€| this one was different. He could handle the nose nipping myth (which he only did on maybe three occasions because he was bored), he could take the warnings given to kids about being alone with him because, hey, stranger danger and all. But he'd never been called evil before. Sure, Jack was mischievous and sometimes things got a little out of control; but he never intended to harm a soul. If anyone had ever died because of his winters, it was always because he went a little more extreme than he should have or that the victim was even more insane than the action that caused their awful demise.

The Guardian of Fun tried to dismiss this lie about himself the whole trip back to the cave. He tried his best to ignore that comment. "Too bad he's evil." That kid's voice echoed in Jack's head over and over again; each time it grew louder and harder to ignore.

The whole scene replayed in his mind. The speech about why winter's supposedly evil, how Jokul is said to hibernate when it gets warm and that being the Vikings' safe haven from him. It just all felt wrong on too many levels to count. If there was one thing that Jack wasn't, it would be evil.

He landed before his destination with a huff. "Old Man Winterâ€| _really?!_" Jack scoffed as he entered the cavern, which was now warmed by a fire sitting a few yards from the pond. Jack's muttering caught the attention of North and Tooth; Jack guessed they finished scouting already too. "Of all the stupid stories I've heard about

meâ€|" he kicked the dirt in frustration.

"Jack, what is it?" Tooth cautiously asked "Did you find anything?"

The teen's muttering grew a little louder "Yeah, a village that needs to find better legendsâ€|"

North perked up "You say you found a village?"

Jack let out an exasperated sigh "Yeah."

"Then what is problem?" North chuckled "We may be closer to Pitch-"

"Do you two have any stupid legends that people have made up about you?" Jack abruptly questioned. North and Tooth stared at one another and back at Jack.

"Of course." Tooth confessed "We all have some story we don't like having our name on."

Jack turned to his fellow Guardians "Are they as bad as being an evil old man who walks around with a bucket and paintbrush?"

Tooth ran her hand over her feathers with a giggle "There have been people who thought that I was a bearâ€| and a man." She looked back at Jack, who cracked a smile.

North sighed "Some cultures think I ride goat." He laughed some more "The sad thing isâ€| was once true. Sleigh got inâ€| ehâ€| an accident right before Christmas. I still needed to deliver toys, so I found the closest thing I could ride that night."

"And it was a goat?" Jack raised an eyebrow.

North's smile widened "Yes." The man's bellowing laughter soon resonated in the space and invited the other two Guardians to join in. "You see, Jack," North continued, once he caught his breath "Part of being a Guardian is acknowledging the tales about you that seem silly and embracing them. Because, though maybe wrong, stories can say that the teller believes." He crossed his tattooed arms with a faint smile.

Jack paused for a moment. He replayed the instance before he stormed out of the village in his mind. He looked over the faces that were even remotely looking in his direction before he fled. None seemed to show any signs of looking at him. Even the children seemed to look right through him when their sights were directed his way by the snarling dragon. The teens seemed to show the same plain faces. But thenâ€| Jack remembered that boy who was holding the book. The teen with freckles that matched his brown hair. Jack recalled the expression within his summery green eyes. They didn't go through himâ€| they were locked on him! He was looking at Jack!

"Are youâ€| are you saying that they might be able to see me?" Jack stammered.

"Is not impossible." North smirked. "If legend exists in this time, there is chance."

"But that's why we need to be careful." Tooth reminded "If we tamper with anything too much, the timeline could become messed up. And who knows what that could mean for all of time to follow? Chronos would be angry with us for sure." She started to nibble her nails.

"Tooth is right." North declared "Try to avoid any contact with humans of this time. Speak with them, should they be able to see you, only if you must."

The Guardian of Fun nodded.

"Now which way was that village, Jack?" Tooth implored.

"East." Jack answered "A mile or two out of the perimeter we established." His elder Guardians gave him knowing looks.
"What?"

"You still don't listen!" Tooth rolled her eyes "At least this time it paid off." She patted his shoulder.

"When Bunny and Sandy return, we tell them and we will set out for this village tomorrow." North glanced at his colleagues "Sound good?"

Tooth and Jack looked at each other and smiled in response.

* * *

><p>From the moment Hiccup woke up the next day, all he wanted to do was go back to bed. That party the night before kept him awake until the blackened night sky began to fade into the scarlets and violets of the rising winter sun; and he knew that the rest of this week was going to be just like this. When Snoggletog came around in his village, parties that lasted well into early the next morning became a near nightly occurrence. The holiday itself was still a week away, but that didn't stop everyone from partying like they were going to Valhalla tomorrow.</p>

The disgruntled teen would have gladly slept longer, except the black monster stomping on his roof was still as persistent as ever. And if the Viking didn't take him out flying soon, some of the shingles would be shattered again; and guess whose job it is to replace thoseâ€¦

He slipped on his fur vest and fumbled down the stairs, trying to rub the remainders of sleep from his eyes, and found that he no longer had to force his desire to slumber away. His heart beat intensified greatly when the front door flew open and slammed into the wall with no restraint. He jumped backwards and fell onto the wooden floor, which must have caught him a million times by now. The groggy boy was suddenly very much awake, thanks to the scare and the pain forming in his back.

"Astridâ€¦?" He asked with a shaky voice, once he saw the girl leaning against the doorway.

"Hiccupâ€¦!" Astrid gasped. She stared into his expression, panting heavily. Her skin was paled and her eyes darted all around the space, as if she was watching out for someone. Hiccup knew that lookâ€¦ but

he hadn't seen it on Astrid until that moment. That was none other than a stare imprinted with fear.

Hiccup stood "What is it?" He asked in a soothing tone.

She gulped and began to fiddle with a strand of her unkempt hair "Iâ€œ!" her voice cracked "I had one of those nightmares last nightâ€œ!"

* * *

><p>"Alright," Hiccup began "I said last night that we would discuss all of these weird nightmares everyone seems to be having and we're doing that now."<p>

Himself and the other members of the Dragon Training Academy were seated on the floor of their arena; and all but Hiccup and Astrid were less than happy about being dragged back to the place once again, especially at such an early hour. The sun was still tinted pink with sunrise for Thor's sake!

"Why do we have to talk about it again?" Snotlout groaned "They're just stupid bad dreams."

"Says the guy who hasn't had one yet." Astrid snarled, hugging her knees closer to her chest "The way it's going, you'll get your turn soon enough, Snotlout."

"Just hear me out." Hiccup interferred. All eyes turned to him "Now, it wasn't so much the dreams that I thought was interesting, but the one thing that seems to be inside every one of them." He stated with his gaze fixed on Fishlegs, Ruffnut and Tuffnut.

"The eyesâ€œ!" Fishlegs gulped.

"Ugh, don't remind me." Ruffnut moaned "I'm trying to repress that."

"Me too." Tuffnut shuddered "They were totally creepy."

"This may be a long shot," Hiccup warned "but I did learn a bit of soothsaying in the past and maybe these nightmares are bad omens of some kind. They could be warning us about something and we just have to figure out what it is." He stood and started to pace before the others "Maybe if we hear more about them, we can figure out what else they all have in common?"

"Well, you already know our story." Tuffnut stated "We don't have to re-tell it, right?"

"I think you two are ok." Hiccup replied "Fishlegs, maybe you can go first?"

Fishlegs whimpered, almost inaudibly "I suppose so." He sighed "I don't remember much, butâ€œ! somehow, everyone I talked to was smarter than me-"

"Wow, that is scary." Snotlout chuckled.

Fishlegs shot him a glare and continued "A-and the only other thing I

remember is that, after I found that outâ€| no one seemed to know I was even there. It's likeâ€| I was invisible."

Hiccup nodded understandingly "And what about the eyes? Where were they?"

Fishlegs' voice hitched "I saw someone I didn't recognize in a crowd and then everything went around me black except for those eyes."

"Alrightâ€|" Hiccup began to think aloud "Random person in a crowd, lights in the forestâ€| Astrid, would you care to share yours now?"

"I guessâ€|" Astrid glanced at the ground for a moment before re-focusing on her friends "I was in battle with someone in a dark hood. It seemed like I was winning untilâ€| something happenedâ€| and the next thing I see is him towering over me with an axe at my neck. I saw that yellow glow in his eyes and everything went black and thenâ€|" She gaped for a moment, the words stuck in her throat "I-I was somewhere else andâ€| I was in chainsâ€| his slave." She forced her eyes shut, trying to block out the memory "No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't break free. And the harder I struggled, the more he laughed." A single tear rolled down her cheek.

Hiccup sat beside her and rested a hand on her shoulder. Her eyes shot open and darted to him. "That sounds terrible." She nodded "They _have _to be connected. But the eyes are the only constant. I'm not sure what it meansâ€|"

"What happened to your soothsaying powers, Hiccup?" Snotlout sneered "Looks like your crazy grandfather didn't teach you too well."

"Don't talk about him like that." Hiccup snapped "He was your grandfather too, remember."

Snotlout scoffed "Yeah, yeah, I know. But even so, he was still a terrible fortune teller; and an even worse doctor."

"Not everything's as easy as you make it out to be." Hiccup retaliated.

* * *

><p>Assisted by Sandy and his cloud of dream sand, the Guardians followed Jack as he led them to the island that he found to inhabit their first possible target. After nearly an hour of flight, the five protectors of childhood touched down where the forest met the village's border.<p>

"Here we are." Jack directed an arm towards the town "Just like I said."

"Not bad, Frostbite." Bunny complimented, once his paws were solidly back on the frozen ground "Any longer and I'd say you got lost."

Jack ruffled his own hair "I kinda didâ€|" he admitted "But I got us here, right?"

"Alright," North clapped his hands together "We should split up and look for signs of Pitch being here. We rendezvous back here at high noon." He gestured to the rising sun "If we find anything, we stay here until we find Pitch and take him down." The Guardians all nodded in agreement and split apart, vanishing behind the trees and buildings that were spread about.

Jack's first choice of action was to track down that group of teenagers again. Now that he thought about it, a few of them had the aura about them that emitted the type of fear that Pitch just loves to feed on. Maybe that would be a decent first clue. The only problem was figuring out where to look. Where around here could he find them? It was still pretty early, but his flying over the square told Jack that about half the residents had started their days and were already hard at work with whatever it is that they do. Using this logic, it was likely that the younger members of this town would be up and about as well.

He swooped through the square and found only adults starting to swarm the area as shops and businesses began to open their doors for the day. Jack peeked inside the windows of any open building and found no youth in sight. It was beginning to get frustrating that he didn't know where these kids hung out during the day. Usually, it was pretty easy to find these spots. After all, they were almost always places that Jack himself was drawn to. But, for the most part, he found nothing. Though, he did get an amusing glimpse of Tooth floating around a man with a ridiculously long blond moustache who looked like he was inspecting a dragon's teeth. He chuckled at the sight.

Classic Toothâ€| he mused with a smile. Even when they were on a mission, it seemed that the faintest thing involving teeth, human or otherwise, was enough to distract the Tooth Fairy. It wasn't surprising at all, but every instance when it occurred granted Jack with a moment's entertainment.

Where could they be? Jack pondered They have to be somewhere around hereâ€| His flight over the island continued, after a small slab of slick ice was carefully placed in front of a Viking lugging a mountain of bread loaves. The boy started to think back to his days in the colonies and thought through the progressing time that he'd experienced. What was the one quality that was always a part in where the teenagers spent their time? Where they could be entertained easily, where there was enough room for many to gatherâ€| where they could get some space from the adults. Seclusion was no longer Jack's ideal of a fun place to be, but it seemed to be something all teens desired throughout time. Privacy to do whatever in secret; their own space. He wandered over the small village with this ideal in mind and eventually came across a worthy target. He landed before a large structure that lacked a roof, which was replaced by a chain net of some sort. The sign on the front read "Berk Dragon Academy."

"This has to be the placeâ€|" Jack reassured himself.

From what he saw, there were no dragons on the island besides that one he saw the night before. But that one seemed quite attached to the group in question. So, maybe they held the dragon in this place. Or maybe they spent a lot of time here because there were no dragons to train and, therefore, a lonely place that they could make their own. Jack strode into the edifice and was soon proven right. Conversation began to resonate through the tunnel leading into the

large, open space that made up the whole construct. Jack couldn't make out most of the echoes, but the words "nightmare" and "yellow eyes" continually caught his attention.

Looks like my hunch was rightâ€| Jack smiled to himself.

The six teens sat in a circle and, lone behold, there was that dragon again. It was reclined on the ground only feet from them. Jack noticed it and grew more cautious in his movements. He was only here to investigate; that dragon noticing him could ruin that, especially if one of these kids really could see him. So, he decided to stay distant, just in case the giant reptile on the ground could sense his presence again. He rested his staff against the wall and he leaned next to it. The Guardian watched as a small argument began to unfold between two of them. It didn't take long for him to recognize these boys. One was the idiot who called him evilâ€| and the other was the one that Jack thought could see him.

"Not everything's as easy as you make it out to be." Jack's possible believer spat.

Jack wasn't sure exactly what this verbal struggle was about, but he couldn't help but say to no one in particular "You have no idea how true that isâ€|"

He expected it to go unnoticed by all the ears that it could reach. He expected his thoughts to stay his own, to stay as invisible as he was sure he was right then. But that's not what he got in response to his remark. Green eyes found their way back onto Jack and widened slightly, as if in some kind of shock. Their owner's mouth was left open just a crack and his judging finger fell back to his side.

Jack was sure of it this timeâ€| that kid can see him.

6. Berk's First Believer

I'm back~! Sorry about no update last week... or the week before... I was on vacation until yesterday and I just didn't have time to update this fic before I left last week. But I'm here now and I updated something like I told myself I would tonight (less than five minutes before it became tomorrow, yes! I made it!)

**This chapter's a little short, but it was really hard for me to write this one out. I changed how Jack and Hiccup interact like three times to make it seem more realistic to everything going on right now. **

**So, thanks for the patience and all of the love this fic gets. It means a lot to me. :) **

* * *

><p>Hiccup's gaze was abruptly taken from Snotlout's smug expression to a strange yet familiar sight. He heard a voice that was foreign to him and saw its source leaning against the wall of the training academy. He was a boy close to Hiccup's age, sporting shockingly white hair and a style of clothes that he's never seen before. The Viking teen could tell that this guy was taller than him, even from that distance, and he was accompanied by a shepherd's crook that was

taller still. He stared at the strange boy in awe. How come he'd never seen this person before? Why was he dressed so weirdly? And why didn't he introduce himself, or even say hello, when he wandered inside the academy? <p>

"What are you looking at?" Fishlegs' question broke his gaze from the boy with white locks.

"Don't you see him?" Hiccup responded; his gaze gravitating back towards the stranger's piercing blue eyes.

His friends all looked in the direction of the boy. All seemed unfazed. Though, he might have seen Ruffnut or Tuffnut react to the sight. But he couldn't say for sure; Tuff and his sister never really expressed emotions besides anger and were otherwise blank faced, unless there was some kind of adrenaline-ridden action happening in the village. In which case, they would crack a smile and a diabolical laugh that almost reminded him of a certain Berserker chief at times.

"Hiccup," Ruffnut stared in confusion "is this a trick or something?"

"There's nothing there." Snotlout proclaimed.

"You're telling me you don't see him?" Hiccup glanced at all of his peers; each looking back at him in confusion and disbelief "How can you not notice someone who looks like that?" He gestured to the boy again and the looks he received only became weirder "He has white hair, for Thor's sake!" A long, cold silence fell over the group. Time trickled by slower than a dragon on some nip.

"Are you okay?" Astrid finally asked "Did you sleep alright last night?"

"Yeah, I'm fine." Hiccup stated, sounding a little offended.

"You didn't try the yaknog last night did you?" Tuffnut chuckled "That stuff's always bound to mess you up."

"I made the yaknog this year." Astrid defensively affirmed.

Uncertainty crept onto Tuffnut's face as he bit his bottom lip.

Hiccup deadpanned "No, I didn't have any yaknog. And, before anyone asks, I did not have more mead than I can handle."

All Hiccup received in reply was blank stares. He wasn't hallucinating, was he? That boy was really standing thereâ€¦ staring right at himâ€¦ right? He couldn't be dreaming; usually his dreams involved himself with dragons rather than peopleâ€¦ except for that one dream about Astrid a few years agoâ€¦ never mind, that's not important. Besides, this was way too vivid to be a dream. It was even tooâ€¦ realistic to be a fantasy made up by his mind. Why would he dream about some mystery boy that only he could see?

No. No, he had to be there. Hiccup just knew that he was really there. How could he put it? It was likeâ€¦ he could feel his presence

in the room. It didn't feel like there were six of them in the space, but seven. He looked as real as anything else around the Viking. He took in a breath and had a sudden feeling of bravery that resulted in him taking intermittent, cautious steps towards the stranger. He needed to see him up close; to ensure himself that this kid really was there. Hiccup heard a few prods from his peers asking him if he was going crazy and to rejoin them for the meeting they were having before this unorthodox interruption. In this curiosity, their calls only became background music to what he was doing. His focus was on this strange teen and nothing else.

His interest only increased as he stepped closer and closer to the kid with white spikes and blueâ€| shirtâ€| thingâ€| what even was that called? It looked too thin to be a coat by any standards; and no shirt he ever saw had a hood attached to it. His approach of the boy brought up another observation: he was really pale; a skin tone so light that Hiccup had never seen it before, or even deemed possible by nature. The growing chill on his freckled skin only added to his suspicion. Maybe he was a ghost or something? Like many people in his home, Hiccup believed in supernatural forces. After all, they believed the gods help their world function. It was foolish not to believe in them around here. But, unlike that same group, Hiccup's belief spanned from the gods to trolls, gnomes and even ghosts and the stranger part of the belief was that it was not out of fear or hollow superstition. Hiccup genuinely thought that these things existed with humans in their world. There was no doubt in his mind that he could be a spirit. But that didn't fully explain how only he could see the apparition, if that were the case. He didn't know who this guy wasâ€| so why him?

The ghost boy's expression became as confused as Hiccup was sure his own was. His posture tensed as Hiccup approached.

"Who are youâ€|?" Hiccup muttered to himself.

"â€| You can see meâ€|?" The boy answered.

Now, if there was one thing Hiccup didn't expect, it was that this kid would hear him, much less actually answer him. He tried to keep up his courageous wall after that little falter. "I can. Why wouldn't I?" He paused to think over what his next question would be. His thoughts were interrupted by a low growl coming from Toothless, who had come to his side at a point unknown to his trainer. The dragon was poised to attack, his green eyes glowing with rage and his back arched to make himself seem bigger than he was. Hiccup was sort of surprised by this action when he noticed the dragon was growling at the phantom before him. Toothless could see him too! He looked from the dragon to the boy with a hint of wonder in his expression; he hadn't seen Toothless act this protective since that incident with the Monstrous Nightmare in the same arena they were presently occupying, at the end of the dragon training program.

"Who are-" Hiccup's question was cut short by another snarl from Toothless, which was enough to spook the target of it to grab his crook andâ€| fly out of the arenaâ€|?

Now this was getting freaky. He stared at the doorway in shock for a minute before turning back to where his friends were; but all he found was more emptiness. He and Toothless were the only ones left inside the dragon academy. Great, Hiccup pondered how am I going

to explain this now?_

* * *

><p>Jack wasted no time in fleeing the building when that black demon was getting ready to tear him limb from limb. He took so little time in escaping its sight that he didn't fully register when he had made it outside and into the sky. That thing was ready to attack him for sure. It must have been in the background the whole time but only cared that the winter spirit was there when that kid got close to him. The dragon was protecting him from Jack.</p>

"The only person here who can see me is guarded by a giant, fire breathing reptile!" Jack muttered "Great. Just great."

Jack knew that he wasn't supposed to talk to people here, if they could see him. He knew very well what disrupting time could potentially cause. But Pitch's impact on this time, should he not be stopped, would be much more destructive than the Guardian of Fun doing what he does best. Speaking of the Nightmare King, Jack did acquire the information that he needed. Pitch was definitely messing around on this island. This was definitely the place; those kids were freaked out about something with yellow eyes in the dreams. I couldn't be anything else. Pitch was using the teens to gain strength. He had to be stopped before he becomes too strong to take down.

He darted to the entrance to the forests and found Bunny and tooth were already back as well. He landed with nothing in mind but to confirm that this was the place that they needed to watch.

"Jack," Tooth greeted "back already?"

"Find anythin' important?" Bunny asked.

"Oh, I did." The winter spirit claimed "This is definitely the place where Pitch is hiding."

"How are you so sure?" The Guardian of Hope quizzed.

"I was watching some teenagers and they were talking about having nightmares; ones that were bad enough to freak them out like never before." His two peers stared blankly until Jack continued "And there was one thing all of the dreams had. Each of them saw yellow eyes before the dream ended."

Bunny was the first to react with shock, but it didn't take Tooth too long to follow "Oh my gosh. But why teenagers? The adults would make better targets, right?"

"He's probably testin' the waters or somethin'." Bunny reasoned "Or maybe he's not strong enough to scare the adults yet. Let's go find North n' Sandy and fill 'em in." The three Guardians rushed back into the village to find their last two members.

* * *

><p>"Jack is right." North reasoned "Pitch must be there. Is only explanation." Sandy nodded in agreement.</p>

The crude map that was now placed on the wall of the cave began to serve as North's battle strategy former. It may not have been to scale, but it was good enough for the plan forming stage.

"And we know he is targeting the younger residents right now. We must start making rounds tomorrow on the island and find Pitch before he is too powerful to stop. We'll split to cover more of the island faster."

"But what about tonight?" Jack interrupted "What if one of them has a nightmare tonight?"

"We're not prepared for what Pitch might have in store for us." Tooth explained "He may be weaker now, but he still could have tricks waiting for us. We have to get ready for everything we can think of tonight. Then, we can take him down."

Though jack didn't like the idea of one more nightmare going without prevention, he had to agree with the female Guardian's logic. If they weren't ready for Pitch's unpredictability, what good would they be against him? It would only make the operation easier for Pitch, with his only apprehenders subdued before he could be stopped. It was best to prepare. But after tonight, Jack would not stand for one more bad dream to plague this village.

* * *

><p>Oh, what a glorious week this had been so far for the Boogeyman. A Viking fear smorgasbord all laid out on a silver platter for him. Only drawing blind eyes, it was only easier to hide in the shadows after he had first been cast there by the Guardians centuries ago. In a time when belief was scarce, Pitch thrived day and night as he plucked another target from his entrÃ©e dish of teenage warriors one by one. Two remained on the plate, just two. He had chosen carefully before preparing another nightmare that evening. One was very brawny, self-confident and seemed to show no real fear. That one was going to be quite interesting to crack open. And the otherâ€œ seemed like more of a disappointment than his first victim. He was nothing but bone and logic. But the feature he had in common with his more promising friend was that he too expressed little to no fear from the recent occurrences. Pitch weighed the pros and cons of each nightmare in his devilish mind before he decided, trying to pick just the right sample to take before the main course came into his grasp.<p>

He chose promise over surprise this round. So, the obnoxious boy with the big nose was the lucky receiver of Pitch's presence when night blanketed the sky on the lonely little island. Slipping inside and into his bedroom was a no-brainer, almost too easy. This was a time when locks and other stupid obstacles of the modern day didn't exist. There wasn't even a guard dogâ€œ or guard dragon, in this time. He hadn't seen more than one dragon the whole time he had been there so far. The Boogeyman had almost forgotten how great an easy entry was, it had been so long.

He crept in to the familiar yet still distasteful sound of snoring filling his ears. Great, it was one of these kidsâ€œ he should have guessed.

"Now then..." Pitch spoke to deaf ears "What does the Sandman have in store for you tonight, my friend?" He wove his hand above the boy's

head "Come on, come on!" Nightmare sand sprinkled onto the boy's head, creating an image of the same child stepping proudly off of a long ship with a mighty sword in his hand. "Well, aren't we the big dreamer? What can we do with you?"

He touched the sand and it grew darker, corrupting the dream on a deeper level. The Viking boy's smirk turned to a grimace as the dark blacks of the sand overpowered the deep purples; the only yellow grains present were shown in a hooded individual's eyes. This character of sand began to imitate Pitch's motions and expressions to the last detail, as he pretended to swing a sword himself and tip an invisible hat off to the dreamer's avatar. The crowd of shadows that were around the Viking all rushed to Pitch's avatar and left the once accomplished soul broken and without purpose. His paled yellow eyes grew brighter in the night as the boy began to toss and whimper in his slumber. A horribly evil laugh resonated from both the man controlling the nightmare and his miniature persona inside of it. Once all of the sand, excluding his piercing golden eyes, were stained as black as the night shadows, Pitch ceased control and held out a hand for the grains to slip back up his sleeve. He took in a breath of relief as he absorbed the power from within the horror he had just created.

"Who would have thought that someone like you would hate when people steal your spotlight!" Pitch smirked knowingly "I just might come back for another round from you, my friend." Then, he vanished into the shadows and left his aftermath to stir within the mind of the boy. This would be one nightmare that he would not soon forget.

7. Fate in Fear

So, this chapter didn't want to get written... I won't even go into it, there were quite a few issues I had with this one. But at least it's finally done... I have nothing else to say, for once, so I'll let you read now...

* * *

><p>The Guardians' tiny cavern was much more animated than it was the day before, as a heated discussion about what to do with Pitch haunting the village was occurring. Tooth suggested that they should watch him for a few nights and see exactly what he's planning to do. Bunny and Jack immediately disagreed with her and claimed that Pitch needed to be stopped before anymore nightmares are had, teenagers or not. As far as Jack knew, North and Sandy remained neutral to this point. But maybe they were just stunned that he and the Easter Kangaroo were actually teaming up for once, instead of going at each other's throats after differing opinions came up.</p>

"We've waited long enough!" The Guardian of Fun slammed a fist into the rock wall "And the longer we put off stopping him, the more powerful Pitch'll be when we finally do try it!"

"We can't just wait and do nothin'." Bunny added "Frostbite only saw the teenagers talkin' about this. What if he's goin' after the kids too?"

"All I'm saying is that we should at least figure out Pitch's angle." Tooth assured "If we know exactly what he wants, we can try to weaken

him or even trap him before her gets too strong for us."

North finally spoke up "I believe that Tooth has a point." The Tooth Fairy smirked at the comment "But so do you two." He gave Jack and Bunny a nod "We are here for the children, but we are also here for Chronos. If time is messed up, we have no idea what it will do to our present. We must stop Pitch before we allow that to happen."

Sandy made an hourglass above his head with sand falling from the top to the bottom at a rapid speed. When the sand was fully taken by gravity, it all dispersed into particles again.

"We are runnin' out of time!" Bunny sighed "We can't just stand here!" he proclaimed.

"And we won't." The Guardian of Wonder assured. "We will go to village and look for Pitch. Jack, you will keep watch of the teenagers, yes?"

"Count on it." Jack replied with a smile.

"Then let's go!" North declared.

All Guardians but Jack quickly followed him to the exit. The eternal youth's mind trailed to the adolescent Vikings he'd encountered the previous day. What was he going to do? If Pitch was going after his friends for some reason, it was only a matter of time until he was touched by the nightmares too.

North glanced back at Jack and stopped "Jack, is there a problem?"

Jack pulled himself out of his daze "Oh, uhâ€| yeahâ€|" He glanced from North to the ground and back at North "What if one of them can see me? Should I warn them?"

The older man was silent for a moment, bringing his hand up to run his plump fingers through his salt and pepper beard "Can one of them see you, Jack?" He mused.

"I don't know." The frost spirit answered "When I was listening in on them yesterdayâ€| it looked like one of them wasâ€| looking at me. But I couldn't tell."

"What I say is," North began "if they can see you, yes, warn them. But be as vague as possible. Any major change to timeline and Chronos will be breathing down our necks forever." His advice accepted with a nod from Jack, he proceeded to the world outside the cave with Jack close behind him.

* * *

><p>After that encounter with the ghost boy the day before, it was nothing but headache for Hiccup. Turns out, his friends all fled because his "weird behavior" was starting to freak them out. Snotlout even went as far as telling Stoick what was going on with his son. Why was still a mystery, but that only made things worse for the Viking boy. From the moment he walked in the front door, his father was interrogating him about the strange kid that he saw in the ring when no one else did. And his father did the same thing his friends

did; asked him questions about what he ate or drank at the party the night before and if he'd gotten enough sleep lately. His answers stayed the same, of course. He didn't know why he could see the guy either, but Hiccup knew that he was really there. Toothless had seen him too, or sensed him. Dragons don't snarl at things that a human's imagination has put there, only things that had a sense of presence. That was the deal breaker for Hiccup; that boy really was there. But there was no sense in trying to prove it. If the auburn-haired teen was the only one who could see him, what would he even argue? The whole village would think he'd lost his mind and they would ship him off to the wrath of the sea gods if he made an effort to discuss what he'd seen in the ring.<p>

Hiccup wandered through the village and felt a strange aura around him. The atmosphere felt only more suffocating when he discovered why there was a more sullen mood about them. He spotted Snotlout talking to Ruffnut, Tuffnut and Astrid about something. Boy, did he seem shaken up. When Hiccup really thought about it, he didn't think he'd ever seen Snotlout's expression the way it was right then. He was constantly looking over his shoulder and he seemed to draw his limbs into himself, as if he was putting on an ever-lasting defensive stance. Astrid and the twins all shared his look of fear, but wore less submissive body language. Their onlooker raised a suspicious eyebrow before advancing towards them, Toothless close behind.

"What's going on?" Hiccup asked.

Almost instantly, Hiccup voice made Snotlout put up a prouder stance and an obviously fake smirk "Astrid just got her revenge on me." He scoffed.

Hiccup paused before continuing "Did you have a nightmare, Snotlout?"

"Yeahâ€|" Some of the cocky teen's faÃ§ade fell "What of it?"

"Did you see the eyes, like everyone else?" The smaller boy wondered. All his cousin did to respond was nod.

"Is this weird to anyone else, or is it just me?" Ruffnut inquired.

"No, I think you have the right to be worried." Astrid confirmed.

"Worried about bad dreams?" Tuffnut rolled his eyes in unamusement "Yeah, they were freaky, but what else can they really do? It's not like they come to life or anything." He shrugged.

"Maybe you all just miss our dragons." Hiccup suggested.

The other teens looked from one to another blankly, sadness eventually covering their once neutral features.

"Maybeâ€|" Astrid sighed.

"I thought I'd be used to them being gone butâ€|" Ruffnut trailed off.

Snotlout groaned "I'll admit I miss Hookfang being around too." His stare was diverted from his boots to Hiccup "And that explains why you haven't had a nightmare yet!"

"Wh-what?" Hiccup stuttered.

"You're the only person on Berk who has a dragon." His cousin carried on "A Night Fury at that. The unholy offspring of lightning and death itself. I bet the bad dreams are even scared of Toothless."

"Snotlout, that's ridiculous." Hiccup retorted "There's no way Toothless would—" Snotlout and Hiccup's banter was suddenly cancelled out by Toothless giving a low growl and hunching his back, to make himself look bigger. "Toothless, what's wrong?"

All of the teens turned their attention to where the dragon was aiming his fierce body language and all but Hiccup seemed to be utterly confused as the black beast pounced and darted after a blur of blue and white.

He heard his friends starting to exchange comment about how his dragon was chasing after nothing, but nothing specific caught Hiccup's attention enough to care. He had a feeling he knew exactly what Toothless was chasing after and he honestly couldn't have been happier that his best friend had seen it again. Without much other thought, Hiccup followed suit; ignoring the calls that came from his peers as they faded into incoherent hums with distance. He did his best to chase down Toothless as he followed the winged blob of black through the village and into the forest. But his plan on keeping up with the massive reptile quickly became nothing more than a black speck in Hiccup's sights before disappearing entirely. After that, the only things the Viking boy could go off of for direction were the paths of trampled snow and branches and the dragon's roars resonating through the array of bared trees; an occasional scream being thrown into the mix of sound. Until, just when Hiccup thought he was closing inâ€| they stopped.

Hiccup picked up speed after that silence fell. One of two things must have happened. Either Toothless had cornered his target or it somehow got away. The latter would normally have been out of the picture but, if Hiccup was correct, the thing being chased by Toothless was the kid that looked like he flew out of the arena the day before. It seemed possible, since the kid moved so fast to begin with. One more snarl from his dragon lead Hiccup to him, finding him standing at the base of a tree, teeth bared and back arched. Another angry rumble echoed from the dragon's throat as Hiccup approached.

* * *

><p>This was definitely not how Jack planned on this meeting going. He was just going to follow the group of Vikings around until that kid, what was his nameâ€| Hiccup, was alone and then he would see once and for all if this kid could really see him or not. But, alas, Jack seemed to be having a bad luck streak going for him ever since he set foot in this time period. The freckled Viking's stupid dragon was with him again (seriously, Jack began to think they were joined at the hip) and as soon as Jack got close enough to hear them talking, it went berserk and attacked him. Like his immortal life depended on it, Jack sped through the small village and, with the

wind's assistance, managed to stay ahead of the bloodthirsty beast for quite some time; enough to get into a deeper part of the forest the surrounded the area. But, of course, Jack's luck turned sour again just as fast as it seemed to be sweet. One bit of messy footing allowed the monster chasing him to reach out a powerful claw and snatch his staff from his trembling hand. Once the staff was removed from his possession, the wind stopped and the winter spirit had no choice but to continue the fight for his hide on foot.

By some miracle, he kept his distance from the dragon long enough to find a tree with lower branches and start a frantic climb to the higher branches. Jack expected there to be even more of a problem from here, since dragons can fly anyway, but he was reacting purely on instinct here. All of those times his mother yelled at him to "get down from there" and he didn't listen were finally paying off. He gripped the last branch strong enough to support his weight like it was his escaping soul. His breathing hitched at random and was otherwise as quick as Bunny's feet during a race.

Then a voice sounded "What was that, bud?" Jack's frenzied heart began to slow as he looked down at the ground and saw that Hiccup boy calming the dragon. The spirit noticed him hold out a hand and the dragon bring its nose up to meet it. And, at that, the creature was almost completely subdued; like nothing ever happened. And it was almost because the moment the teen's green eyes shot up the tree trunk and met Jack, the growling started again. "Toothless." He groaned "It's alright, bud." He smirked up at Jack "Okay, come on down." Jack gave him a quizzical look "He won't hurt 'ya, I swear."

Taking that answer as good enough, Jack began his cautious descent to the snow-ridden forest floor. In retrospect, it should have been easy for the boy who flies through the sky on a daily basis to make his way down from a tree. And that thought would be correct if said boy wasn't still weak in the knees from the dragon attack he'd just endured. He made it down, of course. But he nearly fell on his face a few times and somehow managed to get the back of his hoodie caught on a branch before he finally touched solid ground again. He smiled at the touch of the flakes of winter that were resting under his bare feet and getting in-between his toes.

Jack turned his head back up to meet the boy before him and noticed that he was being given a rather blank look, almost like he was trying to figure something out and making an effort to keep it hidden. "Something wrong?" the Guardian piped up.

"I've seen you beforeâ€|" The Viking hollowly replied "in the arenaâ€|"

"Oh, yeahâ€|" Jack kicked the powdery flakes of snow "That was me."

"And Toothless scared you off yesterday too." The freckled boy continued. Jack nodded "Who are you?" he inquired.

"I'm Jack." The boy with white hair answered, biting his bottom lip afterwards.

"My name's Hiccup." The other answered.

Of course, Jack already knew that, but he couldn't let that go said without some kind of problem or stalker vibe starting. So he simply smiled in response. "Good name." he commented with a chuckle. He held out a hand and Hiccup hesitantly took it to shake. It was strange because the Viking almost seemed shocked that his and Jack's had met. Why, he wasn't sure. But the second the boy noticed Jack studying his face, he neutralized it and seemed to finally register the other's voice.

"Laugh it up." Hiccup drawled, putting his hand back at his side "Frankly, I don't know why anyone would name their kid Jack but I'm not judging."

"You've never met someone with the name Jack before?" The spirit asked.

"Nope." Hiccup plainly responded.

Jack opened his mouth to toss out another remark but then he remembered that he wasn't in his own time. His name had probably not been thought of yet. And, judging by the few names he learned while travelling through the village, they had a long way to go to get there. He sighed "Right. Well, I have something to tell you."

"What?" Hiccup questioned "That you're not going to stop haunting me now?"

Haunting him? Where was all of this coming from, anyway? "No, but someone else is probably going to." He replied, deciding to play along for the time being.

"What do you mean?" The freckled Viking asked.

"Those nightmares your friends have been having," Jack started "They'll come after you sooner or later. Be prepared for them." Hiccup put on a confused look "I'll be around the village for awhile; come and find me if you have one." At that, he ran past the boy and his dragon and into the cover of the trees. Now for the task of re-tracing his steps and finding his staffâ€!

* * *

><p>Hiccup wasn't sure he had properly registered what had just happened. First he sees that ghost kid that seems to have been following him for the past few days and now he was warning him about the nightmares? How did he even know about those to begin with? Did spirits just know stuff like that or something? It would make sense he would know, the more Hiccup thought about it. If Jack had really been following him for some time, he would have definitely heard the freckled teen and the others discussing the bad dreams; especially since he saw the strange boy in the ring right after they finished that talk.<p>

He was forced from his thoughts by Toothless nudging at his side. He decided to disregard what had just happened and climbed onto his dragon's back. They took off into the sky seconds later and started their way back to the village. Or, he tried to disregard it. That warning that he was given kept gnawing at the back of his mind for some odd reason, along with Jack's plea to track him down if Hiccup

did wind up having a nightmare. It was all so strange and random to the young Viking and yet he sensed the urgency that dusted Jack's voice. But should he really take the advice of something that he was sure was slowly making the town think that he was going crazy? Well, at the very least, he would give this Jack guy the benefit of the doubt and expect him to be right about the dreams. Because, really, what could you do to stop a nightmare from coming?

* * *

><p>Pitch waited until the moon was at its highest point in the night sky before he slipped inside the largest house in the village, perched on the top of a hill. This was the home of the last of his teenage sample dish and, he had to say, he was becoming impressed with the nightmares that these very young adults had in their minds. Of course there were a few weak frights in the bunch, but the past two have been a joy to experience. It seems the ones with the strong shells have the most pliable and juicy centers imaginable, just like the candies he had seen in many dreams before he poisoned them with his darkness. He had to remember those two, just in case he needed a little kick of energy or something.</p>

This entry was a trifle more of a challenge due to the fact that this was the only house in the village that had a dragon sleeping under it as well. The last thing that Pitch wanted to do was wake the sleeping monster and awaken his next sample. Whenever humans wake up from a dream and fall back to sleep, the dreams that result are weak and not very interesting at all. Deep sleep is the best condition to pick at their relaxed minds and corrupt their thoughts to his liking.

But even so, this next teenagerâ€¦ he couldn't say he was looking forward to scaring. He was just soâ€¦ pathetic looking, especially now that the Nightmare King was looming over him as he slept soundly. He was a scrawny little thing, to say the least. He sure didn't look like he held any real surprising fears or nightmares. But Pitch had learned very quickly that the scaring business was very tricky. Sometimes, he'd hope for a jolt of power to come from the biggest, toughest child he could find and be utterly disappointed when he discovered that they were afraid of spiders and still slept with a nightlight flickering in the corner of the room. But there were also cases where the least likely of the bunch held the best treasures inside their tortured souls. This was why Pitch had saved this sample for last; in hopes that he would get even a tiny surprise out of him before moving on to the adults of the village who, judging by their lack of limbs, had fantastic stories locked away in their subconscious'.

And he found not long after corrupting the skinny Viking boy's dream that his hopes were going to be met perfectly. The dark purple sand began to tell a tale that its wielder hadn't exactly expected from this next victim. The boy was standing before a much larger man, almost pleading for his attention, and the man had none of it. He waved the boy off and stepped back into the barriers of the sand, leaving the figure of the boy alone.

"Dadâ€¦" He heard the kid mumble in his sleep "noâ€¦" He took in a sharp breath as the sand changed form and showed what looked like a ceremony of some kind. Pitch paid close attention to the stage, where he noted the same man was standing next to the burlier boy he'd terrified the previous night. This time, the kid was standing proudly

rather than being the unfortunate joke that Pitch had made him in his own nightmare. The man held up his arm proudly and the rest of the crowd cheered. Allâ€¢ except for the victim of the nightmare, who was standing a distance away from the massive group of people and holding a tied bag in one hand.

The scene changed once more, much to Pitch's delight, to see the two teen boys standing before one another. Last night's victim was wearing a smug smirk as he spoke. Pitch read his lips to say "You know the deal; now get out of hereâ€¢ Useless." A laugh followed the last word and he walked away with a skip in his gait. His form vanished into the walls of sand and left the host of the nightmare alone once again. He fell to his knees in the nightmare as the giver witnessed a tear roll down the boy's cheek in reality. He also noticed that the kid was curled up into himself and shaking ever so slightly. Some serious fear was just seeping from the boy as, to Pitch's surprise again, the scenery changed to the child alone on a very badly built boat, floating aimlessly through the waves of the ocean.

The boy muttered "Noâ€¢" once more and another tear fell down his face before the sand depleted and vanished into Pitch's hand.

His golden eyes light up light searchlights while the power taken from the horribly delightful story he had created settled within him. He took a deep breath in and sighed with the utmost satisfaction. He glared down at his latest victim and relished in the slight twitches and jerks he made unconsciously, in a desperate effort to thwart off the scare he had just been given. A devious laugh emitted from Pitch's lips as he sauntered back through the window on weightless feet and disappeared into the night with a laugh.

Oh, what a fantastic surge of power that fishbone of a boy held within him! That was by far better than even his best hopes for that encounter to go. He knew, for sure, that the child would become a regular host for the Nightmare King, should he not find any more amazingly twisted minds to wring for suffering. He felt energized, warmed up and ready to take on his prime targets and start building his army of nightmares once again. He was confident that if he kept gaining power like this, the next time he met the Guardians, they would be the ones sent into the hole in the ground!

The only thing he didn't know was that a set of blue eyes were following his retreating form. They narrowed in the darkness, ready to strike, until sense overcame them and their owner dashed from the branch he was resting on and retreated into the shadows.

8. Showdown in the Shadows

**Hello, readers~! **

Sorry about these updates slowing down; school has swallowed up most of my time that I was using for writing and I now only have study hall every day to work on anything. So I think updates might be like this for awhile, since I have two other fics to work on right now, assuming I won't get writer's block and go to a side project in order to come out of it. Just bear with me here, please?

**Anyway, I know at least one of you was worried about why Jack

wasn't there to help Hiccup last chapter and that will be explained in full this time around. Don't worry; I wasn't gonna leave you all hanging there. :P Jack had his reasons. **

**And thanks for the follows, favorites and reviews especially. They always make me smile and giggle in my bedroom like an idiot. **

* * *

><p>The Guardians searched the village all that afternoon and found no trace of the Nightmare King, besides the teens already given nightmares still emanating small bits of fear in their psyches. They had to find him and stop him before he had a chance to get even stronger; it wasn't an option for them to leave more to risk. But with nothing to go off of in the village, the defenders of childhood all agreed on scouring the forest for any signs of his presence. After all, his old hideout was in a wooded area too.</p>

While Tooth, Sandy and Jack separated and searched from the air, while Bunny and North split up on the ground. Jack followed the Guardian of Hope as he hopped through the forest as fast as he could; searching under bushes and anxiously waiting for some of the snow-covered ground to give out under his weight and reveal a tunnel that Pitch could call home for the time being. Every now and then, he'd find North in his sights, scouring the area for hidden caves and passages. They didn't want to leave anything unexamined because he wasn't only threatening the children with his growing powerâ€ but the order of the timeline itself. Pitch could not change the course of history; not without each Guardian making the ultimate sacrifice first.

Jack eventually went off to look for any clues on his own and turned up with nothing, just like the other four defenders of childhood. Wherever Pitch was hiding, it surely wasn't in the wooded area of the island.

"We must find where he is hiding!" North paced in front of the other Guardians, raking his brain for any other ideas. Then, he seemed to get one as he stuck up a finger and his eyes widened "Are there any places he could hide on the beach?"

"I'd be surprised if there weren't." Tooth claimed "The people here know how to use their land. They've probably hidden treasure and who knows what else all over the place. Or maybe even hidden weapons in case of an ambush."

Sandy nodded in confirmation, golden eyes moving from one Guardian to the next, to ensure each received his subtle assurance.

"Then let's go!" Jack called, immediately taking to the sky with the others in pursuit. He glanced at the horizon and noted the setting sun. Man, they spent way too much time in the forest. "We have to move!" He shouted back to them. Pitch would surely go after Hiccup in no time; he had to stop that from happening. He had to. And, right now, finding his lair was the best bet they had.

The Guardian of Fun was the first to touchdown on the sand of the island's beach. He pivoted his head from one setting of rock to another, eyes peeled for any slight deformity or crevice that the Nightmare King could slip inside. Nothing in his sight yet.

"Let's split up." Bunny ordered "Cover as much ground as possible."

Just like that, they all went in different directions. Jack let them fall out of his sights very quickly, as the falling sun and slow brightening of the moon were now his timers. Once the sky was dark, Pitch could saunter around the shadows without any problems at all; he could hide from the five of them without even trying. Not another nightmare would happen in this village if Jack could help it.

More than an hour ticked on by and the winter sprite still hadn't found a thing. He looked at the sky again and acknowledged the moon staring down at him, stars starting to illuminate just as brightly around the Man in the Moon. He'd done enough of this stupid searching for one day; he had to get to Hiccup and protect him himself. Just like that, he took off and soared back to the village as swiftly as he could. The lanterns now their only light source, Jack realized that there were countless places for Pitch to be lurking in. He had to be light on his feet (or, lighter than normal) and prepared for a fight. After everything he went through trying to subdue the guy a year ago, he knew never to trust the darkness when looking for him.

He got to the town square and found it completely barren of life. Well, absent of life excluding the blacksmith's shop, which was still all light up. Jack heard the faint sound of clanking metal and some guy signing a song about something with a mace and a woman with an ugly face? He didn't quite catch it, but he was too focused to really divert his attention anyway.

Now came the hard part: figuring out which house Hiccup lived in. Jack knew nothing about the kid, besides his name, what he looks like and that the guy's dragon probably wants to eat him. He nervously glimpsed from house to house, slipping a section of his finger between his teeth at some point. He started on the ones closest to him and worked his way back. He'd found most of the boy's friends, but Hiccup wasn't anywhere to be found. He floated up into a tree and peeked down at the homes in the village, counting them off to see if he'd accidentally missed one.

But his worries of miscount were silenced when an all-too familiar evil laugh met his ears. Jack gazed up the direction of the noise and saw his target soaring away from a large home on a hill, sounding way too pleased with himself. How could Jack have missed that?! It was right in front of his face the whole time! He climbed down from his branch and growled, angrier with himself than he was with the Nightmare King. He raised his staff to attack but froze as he watched Pitch's vanishing form. He should at least warn the other Guardians that he was out and about... and that he had, in fact, given Hiccup the nightmare they worked so hard to prevent in all the wrong ways. He ran back to the square and shot a line of frost into the sky as a beacon, before taking to the air and riding the wind as fast as he could to catch up with Pitch.

He followed the embodiment of fear at a distance until he closed in and shot another trail of ice at him. The element of surprise, though, was not on his side as Pitch pivoted and avoided the attack with ease.

"You honestly thought that trick would work on me, Frost?" He barked, floating closer to his attacker "Surely not after that warning shot." He gestured to the sky "Pathetic."

"You're gonna pay, Pitch." Jack growled "I'll make you pay for hurting those kids."

Pitch let out the start of another laugh, his corrupt smile showing his jagged teeth "We'll see about that." A scythe was conjured into his hand as nightmare sand slipped from under his sleeve.

Pitch gripped it firmly with both hands and prepared to strike. Jack took the invitation without resistance, shooting forward with a battle cry. Their weapons clashed and the two wrestled with their grips and the other's strength, little particles of black sand and flakes of snow sputtering from their respective sources. Jack started to struggle against Pitch within a minute of their little stalemate. He had gotten stronger in this time, that was for sure. Strong arms with gray skin began to extend, pushing Jack further away no matter how hard he tried to fight back. Then, a final shove sent the Guardians of Fun faltering back a few yards. Okay, not the best way to start a fight. Jack had to come up with another plan until back-up arrived.

Little time came to formulate a plan when Pitch swooped in front of Jack and swung his scythe at the boy's neck, Jack's ducking the only reason he didn't receive the attack. Cold and darkness continued to mix and an array of blows, Jack growing more desperate to fight for his cause and his life and Pitch simply enjoying the entertainment, from the look in his horrid golden eyes. Whoever said that gold was pure was clearly wrong at that moment. Jack changed his strategy, deciding to keep Pitch moving rather than containing the fight. The Guardians had to find him and help him out. Pitch was stronger at this point than they thought; he couldn't take the guy down on his own.

He didn't make it very far when Pitch swung his scythe and the back of Jack's hoodie was snagged on the point. He heard a laugh before he was thrown onto the ground, toppling some stray supplies that he landed into over. He lifted a bucket from his head and noticed that they were back where the chase started; Hiccup's house. Great. So much for an unnoticed battle.

Pitch began to descend at a rapid pace but his feet never touched the ground as Jack made a swifter kick and he was sent into a small snow bank. Jack leapt over to him and loomed over him, putting the end of his staff to the other's neck.

"What are you doing here, anyway?" Jack interrogated.

"I believe you already know." Pitch rolled his eyes and vanished into the shadow touching the snow bank. Jack stared at the spot in confusion until he heard a step behind him, finding Pitch was there "I've told you before, there will always be fear. And fear is the greatest power."

"Fear may exist." Jack countered "But we will always be around to fight fear."

"You mean the Guardians?" Pitch piped "The Guardians who aren't here?

Such a great system, Jack; I admire it."

Jack took another swing at the Nightmare King and was met with another empty shadow. A resonating laugh chimed around him and he turned to find the being of fear preparing to make a blow with his scythe. Their weapons clashed once more and another struggle of strength between fun and fear began.

"You give up yet, Jokul Frosti?" Pitch's sinister smirk only grew with Jack's eyes at the sound of that name and the Nightmare King began to overpower him again. "You honestly think I don't know that name by now, Jack?" He chuckled "I should have known that's what you'd think. After all, you weren't him."

Jack jumped back, still wide-eyed "What do you mean?"

"They never told you?" Pitch let his scythe turn back into sand, which retreated back under his coat, and paced slowly in front of him "He was The Man in the Moon's little winter spirit before you. But as time went on, apparently, he somehowâ€| stepped out of line." He smirked, lifting a finger to his chin "So he had his little personal guard get rid of him." He stopped in front of Jack "That's when he created you." He jabbed a long finger into Jack's chest just in time to feel the boy's breath hitch. He smiled again "You're just as weak as he was."

Jack didn't register what had happened next. One moment, he was only inches from Pitch, hearing more about his creation than he thought was there and the next he's against the outside wall of Hiccup's house, his staff has escaped his grip and his head began to hurt. Through blurry vision, he saw Pitch retreat into the shadows and disappear. At that moment, he wondered where the other Guardians were. They must have heard the fight he'd just been in, even if they didn't see his call for help. His world slowly became black as he lied there on the frozen ground, drifting somewhere between awake and asleep.

* * *

><p>"â€|ackâ€| Jaâ€| Jack!" was heard through ringing ears when the winter sprite finally awakened. Tooth was hovering over him, glowing purple eyes scanning over him until they met his fluttering eyelids. She called something else that the ringing tuned out and the remaining three Guardians rushed over to them.<p>

Jack's vision began to clear and he saw an exclamation point over Sandy's head. Someone lifted his head and he glanced around to see North as he one to do so.

"Jack," North's voice echoed in his head "How are you feeling?"

The dazed Guardian managed to sit himself up and hold his head in his hands "Like a truck hit meâ€| he grumbled. He rubbed his eyes, his sights finally going back to normal, and saw that he was back at the hideout. "When did I get back hereâ€|?"

"We found ye passed out." Bunny explained "Sandy saw yer frost shootin' through the sky and came to warn us all... ye can guess it took awhile to give us the message." He chuckled and looked down at the small man, who sent a fume of sand from each of his ears in

anger.

"So we brought you back here so you could rest." Tooth continued. "North and Sandy went back to look for Pitch but didn't find him. They came back a little while before you came to."

"I found him too late." Jack sighed. "He did it again and he's stronger than we thought."

"He must be using the nightmares to siphon power for himself." North guessed. "Going to the children must have been him testing the village."

"And I only let him get stronger last night." Jack announced.

"You did what you could, Jack." Tooth encouraged. "We just underestimated him; it won't happen again."

Sandy gave a thumbs up at Jack, who grinned in response.

"What's our next move?" Jack asked.

"We go back tonight and we stay together." North answered. "We won't let anyone else be overpowered."

"We think it might be better if ye stay here though, Frostbite." Bunny added.

"What? No way!" Jack defended. "I'm not sitting around here twiddling my thumbs while Pitch is doing who knows what out there."

There was a small pause before Tooth gave a concerned look. "You should rest, Jack. We just don't want you to hurt yourself even more."

"I can handle it this time." Jack declared.

The elder Guardians exchanged looks and gestures before a nod from Sandy convinced Jack he'd won. It was confirmed when The Guardian of Hope assured. "Alright, mate. Just try to be a little less careless, eh?"

Jack chuckled. "I'll do my best." He took his staff from the place on the wall that it was resting on and twirled it between his fingers. "I think I'll go see what Pitch did this time."

"Wait, you're talkin' to them?" Bunny asked. Jack nodded. "You'd better have a good reason-"

"I do." Jack stated. "One of them can see me and he doesn't suspect a thing. But maybe, if I ask him about the nightmares he and his friends are having, we can find out what's going on. There has to be a hint somewhere that we're not seeing."

"Tread with care, Jack." North warned.

"I know." At that, Jack turned and walked out of the cave, flying above the line of trees and back to the island. The trip was slowly becoming shorter as he went back and forth so many times. He'd even found a few shortcuts, believe it or not, and some great places to

catch a great breeze to ride on.

He landed in front of Hiccup's house at the crack of dawn and sat in the snow to wait for the boy to come outside, assuming that he hadn't already left to do something else. He sat in silence for a few minutes before he heard some stomping on the roof of the building. Jack stood in an effort to see what was causing the noise. It couldn't have been Pitch, could it? Jack had never seen him attack twice in one night, much less by way of the roof. He floated up to and stood on the shingles and found the next worst thing as the source of the sounds.

The dragon was outside?! Since when?! Jack didn't see or hear the thing at all the night before. Then again, it was as black as the night; it could have easily just not caught the young spirit's eye. At first, the creature didn't notice that Jack was there. Then, Jack made the mistake of trying to level out his feet and making a small creak in the process. Fast as lightning, the dragon prepped for attack and leapt towards Jack. And, just as fast, Jack jumped off the roof and ran as fast as he could, then flying even faster, as the monster chased him from very close behind.

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up early the next morning in a cold sweat, with tear stains painted on his cheeks. He wiped his damp brow with his sleeve and took deep breaths. What a nightmare! He gasped and let his leg dangle over the edge of the bed while he attached his other one with shaky, clammy hands. He got his prosthetic on after a few fruitless efforts and stumbled down the stairs, throwing on his vest as he went. Maybe going flying would clear his head!

He stepped outside and peered around for Toothless, finding barrels knocked over, indents in the snow that weren't there the night before and weird patterns of frost blanketing one wall of the house. What happened here? Hiccup pondered This couldn't have been Toothless- where is Toothless, anyway?

As if on cue, he heard a roar sound from the forest, followed by a shout that was almost too familiar to the Viking. On the lightest feet he'd ever seen, Jack came bolting out of the wall of trees with the black dragon close behind, eyes emanating attack and pointed teeth formed into a snarling grimace. The white-haired weirdo's blue eyes landed on Hiccup and he sprinted to the boy, leaping and hiding behind the boy's much smaller form and cowering.

"H-help!" Jack squealed at a pitch that Hiccup didn't think was possible to reach "He's gonna eat me!"

The dragon crept forward and reached the pair, teeth bared and pupils no more than thin slits of pure rage. Hiccup felt Jack flinch, as he was now gripping the brunet's shoulders for dear life, while he stayed unfazed by Toothless' behavior. His expression stayed blank and he put out a steady hand for his dragon. A small growl sounded from his throat but he nonetheless bowed his head and touched it to his trainer's palm. The eyes that were slits when he closed them opened to a more relaxed state. He sat in front of Hiccup and looked at him expectantly.

"How do you even?" Jack breathed "He was about to!"

The boy turned to the ghost boy with the same neutral demeanor "I'd stay calm; he can smell your fear." He turned around and crossed his arms "What is it about you that he doesn't like? He doesn't behave like that around anyone else."

Jack shrugged "Beats me. I didn't do anything to him." Toothless let out another growl, making Jack jump and grip Hiccup again.

"What are you following me for?" The Viking interrogated.

"You had one last night, didn't you?" The spirit asked.

Hiccup's plain face began to show slight signs of fear and sadness. "Yeah." He nodded "I did." He paused for a moment and stared at the other boy quizzically. "How did you know that was going to happen?" Jack gave his own confused look "You warned me yesterday and you know I had one."

"Oh, that, uhâ€|" Jack shuffled his toes through the snow "Justâ€| intuitionâ€|?"

"Yeah, sure." Hiccup remarked "That's obviously why a ghost knows what's going on with me."

Jack perused his lips "How do you know I'm a-"

"You don't think I saw you fly when Toothless scared you the other day?" Hiccup questioned, looking Jack over "And it would explain why your stick is glowing right now."

"It's a _staff_." Jack corrected, clearly offended by the other boy's comment "Do you see shepherd's herding sheep with sticks? No, they use _staffs_."

"Soâ€| you're the ghost of a shepherd who is haunting me becauseâ€|?" Hiccup questioned.

"I'm not haunting you." The apparition clarified "I'm trying to help you, whether you realize it or not."

"Yeah, by warning me about a nightmare." Hiccup commented "Gee, that sure was helpful, ever-powerful spirit. Thank you for telling me I was going to have a bad dream; how could I ever have gone on without knowing that?"

Jack scoffed "You'll realize that just maybe you'll need me around. Those aren't just bad dreams, kid." He stepped closer "Not even close." Toothless growled again, but it must have fallen on deaf ears to Jack.

"Then what are they?" The Viking remarked, calming Toothless with a scratch "A bad omen? Is something terrible gonna happen to me and my friends unless I abide by what _you _tell me to do?"

"Maybe." Jack got out of Hiccup's face and stroked his chin "Did you see the eyes too?" Hiccup nodded again "They must mean somethingâ€|" Jack muttered, unaware Hiccup heard him "I promise, I'll find a way to make sure they don't come back."

Then, just as fast as he seemed to appear, Jack flew off "What does that mean?!" Hiccup shouted into the sky at Jack's retreating form "Great," he stroked Toothless behind the ear "He warns me about stuff and doesn't give detailsâ€| how is that supposed to help anyone?" Toothless made a gurgling noise as if to go along with what Hiccup said "Alright, bud. What do you say we go flying?" Toothless bowed his head and his rider climbed on, securing his prosthetic in the stirrup before taking off into the morning air. Hopefully the chill in the wind would wake him up from his haze and clear his head.

9. You can all yell at me as you see fit

Hello, readers!

So, uhâ€| this is just a little announcement that I have about this story and what's going on with it right now. You seeâ€| if you read any of my other fics in progress, you already know that school and figuring out stuff for college are really eating up my time and slowing my updates on all of them. But it's also starting to get to the point where I obviously won't have enough time to update three stories at a time, like I have been since summer started (or maybe trying to is more like itâ€|) and I'm going to lower my fics being updated to two for awhile. So, after some debating during the little free time that I have, I've decided that, sadly, this story is going to be the one that I will at least greatly slow updates of. But before you get mad at me, I have reasons for this.

1.) I still have quite a bit of organizing to do on this fic and figuring out how I'm going to place things and space them out over the chapters (or chapter plans that I'll alter as I write it; I just need more of an idea of exactly what I'm doing here).

2.) Out of my three fics currently in progress, this is the one that I have the least motivation to write right now. It's still at this kind of awkward point where I'm building things up to the things that I actually **_*_want*_ to write and am looking forward to writing and, for some reason, my motivation isn't in the parts of the story where I'm just building relationships and suspense. **

3.) I would work on this fic, I really would, if I had more time on my hands. But I absolutely have to keep as much time for me to just unwind after school and relax as possible. I'm trying to get control of my anxiety issues at the moment and figuring out what colleges I should apply for and maintaining my grades where I'd like them to be are stressing me out enough as is. I write my fics for my own amusement and because I love hearing positive feedback on my ideas and it **_*_really*_ shouldn't be another cause of my stress. Two is a number that I can easily manage and use to keep myself entertained in study hall and when I'm bored on the weekends, while still having some kind of schedule or mental deadline to my updates (because I only get things done if I have a deadline set in mind for itâ€|) **

**So, I'm sorry to everyone who really likes this fic and has been waiting for an update but they will be far-in-between at best for the moment. If I get a break from school or a sudden spark of inspiration for this story, I will take down this reminder and update it. But, as it sits right now, I'll come back to this fic on a basis once I hit a roadblock in another fic or when I finish one of the ones that I will

be continuing. I feel bad about this, I really do. I know that there's quite a few of you that really like this story and I hate disappointing people but this just has to be done. I can't juggle three fics and everything that's currently going on in school and in my personal life.**

And, uhâ€| sorry if any of you thought this was finally an update of some kind and got excitedâ€| *hangs head in shame* sorryâ€|.

End
file.